

SUMMER READING PULL-OUT

OKLAHOMA TODAY

\$2.95

Wild Forever

**NATURE CONSERVANCY
PRESERVES: VIEWS
YOU CAN COUNT ON**

.....
A TOWN CALLED TOM

.....
**ART MEETS LIFE IN
THE BOONIES**

.....
**GARDENING:
LOOK MA, NO WATER!**

July-August 1993



CHEROKEE

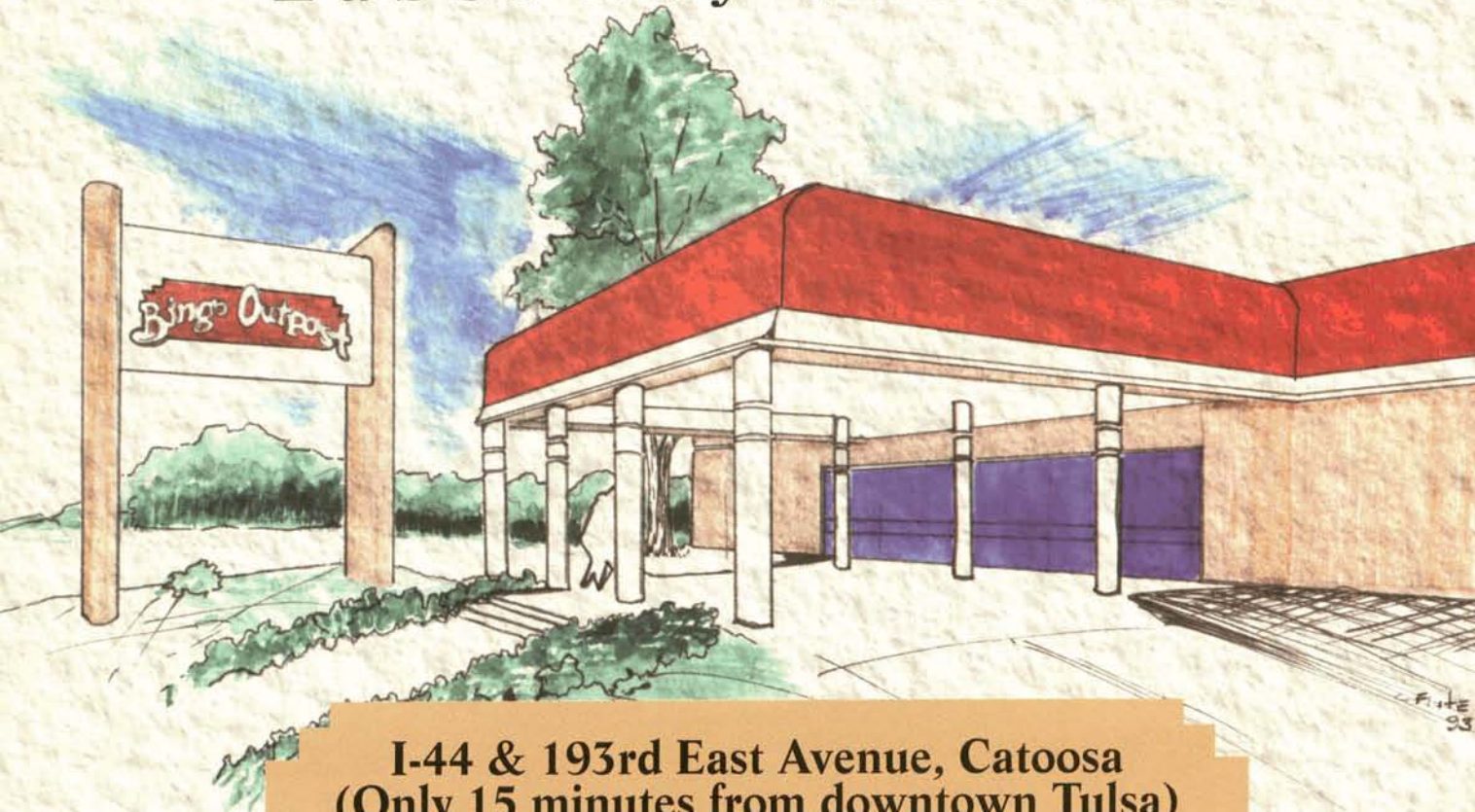
NATION

Bingo Outpost

Northeast Oklahoma's Premier Entertainment Center

GRAND

O • P • E • N • I • N • G
Labor Day Weekend!



**I-44 & 193rd East Avenue, Catoosa
(Only 15 minutes from downtown Tulsa)**

Also visit the Cherokee Nation's Roland Bingo Outpost
(Exit 325, I-40 at HWY 64, 7 miles west of Ft. Smith, AR)

OKLAHOMA TODAY

July-August 1993

Vol. 43, No. 4

FEATURES

A TOWN CALLED TOM 22

Tom, Oklahoma, is just a wide place in the road, but a community feeling flourishes there that can only be called by one name. Love. *By Ralph Marsh, photographs by David Fitzgerald*

HORACE POOLAW: AN AMERICAN LIFE 32

Kiowa photographer Horace Poolaw snapped pictures for postcards that his children sold for pennies. Along the way, he created an extraordinary record of his people's culture. *By Jeanne M. Devlin*

OKT SUMMER READER I

Oklahoma voices raised in a regional chorus. *Stories and poetry by Sheilah Bright, Robert J. Conley, Robert R. Mercer, Louis Littlecoon Oliver, Larry Short, Howard F. Stein, and Gordon Weaver.*

BOONDOCK ARTISTS 39

Not every artist yearns for New York or Santa Fe. Meet three who are happy to live in the sticks. *By Barbara Palmer, photographs by Dennis J. Holm*

WILD FOREVER 46

When it comes to protecting the state's most threatened or rare species and habitats, the Oklahoma Nature Conservancy succeeds where others fail. The secret? Money and a pragmatic philosophy. *By Burkhard Bilger*

OUR CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON 56

Losers. Underdogs. The doormat of the triple A league. The Oklahoma 89ers were all those things at the beginning of the 1992 season. So how did they come home with the pennant? *By Steve Fireovid, illustrations by Gil Adams*

ON DRIER GROUND 60

Meet the pioneers who want to liberate you from the tyranny of the lawn mower. And with xeriscaping—using low-water, low-maintenance plantings—you'll conserve water, too. *By Maura McDermott*



Page 60



Page 56

DEPARTMENTS

ONE ON ONE 4

LETTERS 8

MARKET PLACE *Cool Stuff* 10

ACROSS THE RANGE 13

TRAVEL PLANNER *Summertime Jams* 69

ENTERTAINMENT CALENDAR 71

COVER: Approaching thunderstorm in the Tallgrass Prairie north of Pawhuska. *Photograph by Harvey Payne.*

OKLAHOMA History and Culture

THE CULTURE OF OKLAHOMA Edited by Howard F. Stein

and Robert F. Hill

Foreword by Fred R. Harris

This fascinating book describes how Oklahomans perceive themselves and how others outside the state view them. "A marvelous document. . . I have long felt that part of Oklahoma's inferiority complex stems from lack of knowledge of where we came from and who we are. . . My compliments to the authors."—**Frosty Troy**, editor, *Oklahoma Observer*.

\$29.95 Cloth; \$14.95 Paper

THE CHEROKEE STRIP

A Tale of an
Oklahoma Boyhood
By Marquis James
With a New Foreword by
William W. Savage, Jr.

"Here is the perpetual variety of small town Oklahoma characters, incidents, changes; the self-confidence of an American boyhood; in honest, winning revelation."—**Kirkus Reviews**.

\$14.95 Paper

From your bookseller, or



University of Oklahoma Press

(Call 1-800-627-7377, or write)
Dept. MAY1
1005 Asp Ave.
Norman, OK 73019-0445
Add: \$2.50 Post/hand.
Accept: MC/Visa/AE/Checks.
Write for FREE catalogs.



This One's For You.

As our regular readers know, we're not ones to tread water. With every issue we try (sometimes with more success, sometimes with less) to give you a better magazine. With one issue, it might be as simple as adding something that hasn't been there before, like the poetry of Howard Stein on page XI of our annual Summer Reader. Sometimes, it is more akin to tinkering—as in the case of our design, which we have been working on a little bit at a time, like a weekend mechanic painstakingly rebuilding a classic hot rod to some ideal blueprint in his mind.

Because *Oklahoma Today* is a work in progress, it means a lot when our readers take the time to drop a note and tell us they especially liked (or hated) a particular photo or phrase. We love the give-and-take, and we couldn't do without the story tips you send in. Call us sentimental, but we like to think that we're all in this together, and so we hope you're as proud as we are that *OKT*—for the second time in three years—has been named "Magazine of the Year" by the Regional Publishers Association.

Chosen from a field of regional magazines from the U.S. and abroad—including *Adirondack Life*, *Arizona Highways*, *Mid-Atlantic Country*, and *Ireland of the Welcomes*—*Oklahoma Today* became only the fourth regional magazine in the

competition's history to win the title more than once. (Other lucky souls? *Arizona Highways*, *Yankee*, and *Ohio*.)

Besides bringing home the silver cup, *OKT* won five other awards: Burkhard Bilger's "Where the Buffalo Roam" (January-February 1992) won a gold for Best Natural History Story, as did our annual Native American issue (May-June 1992) for Best Special Issue. Michael Wallis, a perennial favorite with *OKT* readers, won a silver for Best Feature Story for his profile "Joe Don Looney: Football's Unrepentant Rebel" (September-October 1992). Other awards: a bronze for Best Cover (November-December 1992) and a silver for Overall Design.

In this time of downsizing, we know

we couldn't have competed against magazine giants like *Arizona Highways* and *Beautiful British Columbia* (which need more than two hands to count their staffs and an abacus to tally their subscribers) without the hard work and home-grown talent of a staffer like senior editor Barbara Palmer and hired hands like art director Steve Walker and his crew.

Those of you who have ordered a subscription from Pam Poston, chatted about a change of address with Melanie Mayberry, checked on an invoice with Lisa Breckenridge, con-

firmed a fact with Renae Romans, or placed an ad with Brian Brown or Tiffany Murray know we try to go that extra mile to show how much we appreciate your support.

In other words, y'all, this one's for you.

—Jeanne M. Devlin



The OKT staff: 1. Berl Schwartz, publisher (with the "Magazine of the Year" cup); 2. Jeanne Devlin, editor; 3. Steve Walker of Walker Creative, Inc., art director; 4. Barbara Palmer, senior editor; 5. Renae Romans, editorial-publishing assistant; 6. Melanie Mayberry, circulation manager; 7. Lisa Breckenridge, administrative assistant; 8. Brian Brown, marketing manager; and 9. Pam Poston, subscription services.



LOOKIN' FOR A MASKED MAN RIDIN' TALL IN THE SADDLE?



YOU ALREADY KNEW you'd find a little of the West in Oklahoma City. But maybe you didn't know you'd also find The National Cowboy Hall of Fame, a full schedule of rodeo and equestrian events, and world-class horse racing at Remington Park, where heroes of small stature ride to glory atop their trusty steeds.

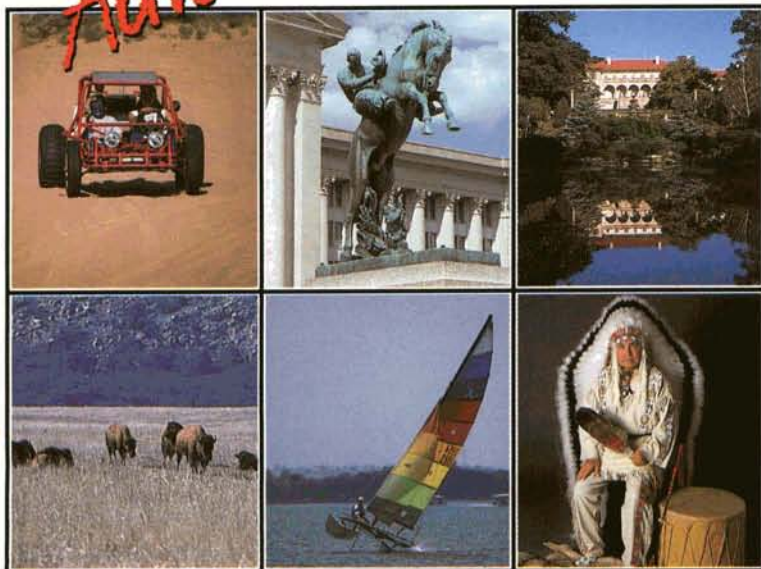
OKAY, KEMOSABE!
It's in Oklahoma City.

**It's A
Wonderful Life!**

IN OKLAHOMA CITY. CALL OR WRITE THE OKLAHOMA CITY CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU, FOUR SANTA FE PLAZA, OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73102, 1-800-225-5652.

NATIVE

Adventure



Oklahoma Adventure Guide Series™

Six magazines - more than 280 pages of full-color vacation excitement!

Adventure Guide to Frontier Country™

Central Oklahoma's Frontier Country offers western heritage and hospitality—from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame to rodeos and Native American extravaganzas. Museums, galleries and historic towns tell the story of our unique beginnings. Enjoy world-class horse racing, botanical gardens and the pleasures of metropolitan Oklahoma City.

Adventure Guide to Great Plains Country™

Southwest Oklahoma's Great Plains Country offers the Wichita Mountains and the endless horizon of the great plains. The Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge, Indian City U.S.A., the 600-nation Festival of Flags, Quartz Mountain Resort, state parks, lakes and museums make the region a great vacation destination. 405/535-4464

Adventure Guide to Green Country™

Northeast Oklahoma's Green Country offers six major lakes, canoeing, scenic rivers, breathtaking drives, diverse entertainment and a rich history ranging from Mozart to ancient civilizations and the end of the Cherokee Trail of Tears, the oldest military fort in Oklahoma and the cosmopolitan amenities of Tulsa. 800/922-2118

Adventure Guide to Kiamichi Country™

Southeast Oklahoma's Kiamichi Country offers year-round trout fishing, equestrian, canoe and hiking trails, national forests and eight magnificent State parks. Beautiful Talimena Scenic Drive and Winding Stair Mountain plus bluegrass concerts, Italian heritage and rodeos add up to a memorable vacation. 800/722-8180 • 918/465-2367

Adventure Guide to Lake Country™

South central Oklahoma's Lake Country offers Arbuckle Mountains, Turner Falls, Arbuckle Wilderness, Lake Texoma, Lake Arbuckle, Lake Murray and McGee Creek Reservoir-Atoka. State parks, resorts, museums and historic homes plus houseboat vacations and world-famous striper fishing add to the fun. 405/369-3392

Adventure Guide to Red Carpet Country™

Northwest Oklahoma's Red Carpet Country offers the mystical Alabaster Caverns and selenite crystal dig. Rodeos, museums, historic homes, Little Sahara sand dunes, Custer battle site, Roman Nose Resort, Black Mesa and the Pioneer Woman statue are good reasons to explore this region of Oklahoma. 800/447-2698 • 405/327-4918



Order the set of six FREE guides or choose the one(s) you want. Write:
Oklahoma Adventure Guide Series™
P.O. Box 96122, Dept. 220
Oklahoma City, OK 73143

OKLAHOMA TODAY

David Walters, Governor



Published by the Oklahoma
Tourism and Recreation Department

Berl Schwartz
Publisher

Jeanne M. Devlin
Editor

Steven Walker, Walker Creative, Inc.
Art Direction

Barbara Palmer, Senior Editor
Melanie Mayberry, Circulation Manager
Brian C. Brown, Marketing Manager
Lisa Breckenridge, Administrative Assistant
Pam Poston, Subscription Services
Renae Romans, Editorial-Publishing Assistant
Steffie Corcoran, Copy Editor

Contributing Editors
Burkhard Bilger, M. Scott Carter, David
Fitzgerald, Maura McDermott, Ralph Marsh, and
Michael Wallis

Advertising Account Executive
Tiffany Murray

Tourism and Recreation
James C. Thomas, Executive Director
David Davies, Deputy Director

Tourism and Recreation Commission
J. Patrick Bark, Chairman
Jack Mildren, Lt. Gov.
Sweet Pea Abernathy
C. Coleman Davis
Linda A. Epperley
Charles S. Givens
Donald L. Benson
Ray H. Quackenbush
Michael D. Tipps

Oklahoma City Advertising Sales Office, P.O. Box
53384, Oklahoma City, OK 73152, (405) 521-2496
or (800) 777-1793.

Oklahoma Today (ISSN 0030-1892) is published
bimonthly in January, March, May, July,
September, and November by the Oklahoma
Tourism and Recreation Department, 401 Will
Rogers Bldg., P.O. Box 53384, Oklahoma City,
OK 73152, (405) 521-2496 or (800) 777-1793.
Subscription prices: \$13.50 per year in U.S.;
\$18.50 per year outside U.S.

U.S. copyright ©1993 by Oklahoma Today
magazine.

Reproduction in whole or in part without
permission is prohibited. The magazine is not
responsible for unsolicited material for editorial
consideration.

Printed at PennWell Printing, Tulsa.



Second-class postage paid at Oklahoma City, OK, and
additional entry offices. Postmaster: Send address
changes to Oklahoma Today Circulation, P.O. Box 53384,
Oklahoma City, OK 73152.

The All New 1993 Ford Probe

A pure driving experience. Nothing less.



Fred Jones
FORD

OKLAHOMA CITY • TULSA

PHOTOGRAPHED AT THE WATERFORD HOTEL

Letters

EXPANDING ON OKIE TALK

Here are some additions to "How To Talk Oklahoman" (March-April 1993).

Daincin'. Okie talk for dancing.

Ga-is. fuel for the vehicle which takes you to the "daine."

Ford. not the vehicle which takes you to the daine, but a crossing on a "crick" along the road to the daine. (If there's been a recent "frog-strangler," a cautious driver will stop and take a "gander" to determine whether the stream has "run-down" enough to "ford.")

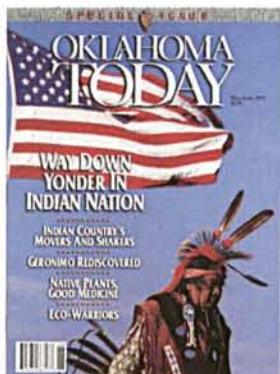
Play-party. a down-home get-together hosted, usually, by folks who do not approve of daincin'.

Shuck. 1. to remove the husks from a roastin' ear of corn. 2. to quickly shed one's britches after venturing too close to a hornet's nest or red-ant bed.

Swaing. 1. a gunny sack filled with sand that is ridden by children and sus-

pended on a long rope from a high tree branch. 2. a seat hanging from ropes on the front porch or in the backyard, used by older folks to "set in," "gabbin'," and "sippin'" on a glass of iced tea!

Nan F. Ogden
Marlow



May-June 1993

Our staff's current favorite Okieism? The plural for ya'all, which we've determined to be, "all ya' all." Hey, Garth uses it!

HOW DO YOU TRANSLATE THAT?

I have been receiving *Oklahoma Today* for two years, and I really enjoy reading your magazine. I traveled two times in Oklahoma, in 1983 and 1990. I have some friends living in Oklahoma City who had the excellent idea to offer me a subscription to a bimonthly journey through your beautiful country.

I live in Switzerland, which is about four times smaller than Oklahoma, so I can understand better how large and diversified your state is when I read your articles, always illustrated by splendid

scenic photographs and portraits.

In your March-April 1993 issue, I especially loved your travel notes, "How To Talk Oklahoman." It reminded me emotionally of the first time I came to Oklahoma and could not understand any word for about two days.

Keep on publishing such an interesting magazine: I am sure that many readers from outside Oklahoma are looking forward to visiting your country, even if they live many miles away.

Philippe Druey
Payerne, Switzerland

WAY DOWN WHERE?

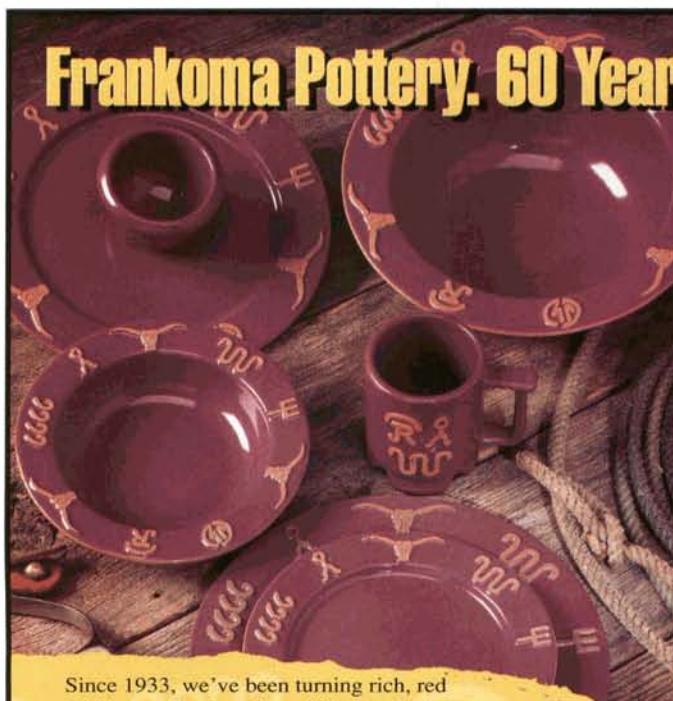
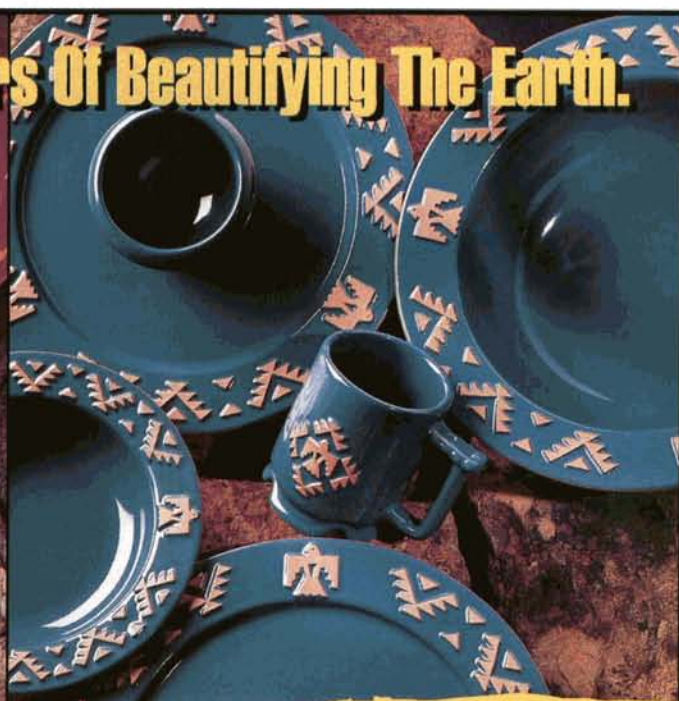
Okay, now you guys have done it! Dad drat-it! "Way Down Yonder in the Indian Nation"/Thousand miles from civilization..." What's the rest of it? I'm being driven to distraction trying to remember!

My dad, who made one of the Oklahoma land runs, used to sing it as he worked. Please publish the rest of it!

Ross F. Cooke
Henderson, Nevada

Jack Guthrie and Woody Guthrie wrote the words and music for "Oklahoma Hills," and

Frankoma Pottery. 60 Years Of Beautifying The Earth.

Since 1933, we've been turning rich, red Oklahoma clay into beautiful, practical dinnerware, artware, collectibles, sculpture and souvenirs.

Microwaveable. Dishwasher safe. Ovenproof.

Two great locations! Visit our Tulsa Gift Shop at The Market near Woodland Hills Mall

68th & S. Memorial • (918) 254-7765
(next to Service Merchandise)

Or see it made in Sapulpa!

Free plant tours every weekday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Factory Outlet and Gift Shop open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Call for Sunday and holiday hours.

One mile north of Sapulpa on historic Route 66.

FRANKOMA POTTERY

Box 789 • 2400 Frankoma Road
Sapulpa, Oklahoma 74067
918-224-5511 • 800-331-3650
Fax 918-227-3117

their musical notations are quite clear: play this song, "Bright, without remorse":

Oklahoma Hills

Many months have come and gone since I wandered from my home,
In those Oklahoma hills where I was born.
Tho' a page of life has turned and a lesson I have learned,
Yet I feel like in those hills I still belong.

Way down yonder in the Indian nation,
I rode my pony on the reservation,
In those Oklahoma hills where I was born.
Way down yonder in the Indian nation,
A cowboy's life is my occupation,
In those Oklahoma hills where I was born.

But as I sit here today many miles I am away,
From the place I rode my pony thru the draw.
Where the oak and blackjack trees kiss the playful prairie breeze,
In those Oklahoma hills where I was born.

Way down yonder in the Indian nation,
I rode my pony on the reservation,
In those Oklahoma hills where I was born.
Way down yonder in the Indian nation,
A cowboy's life is my occupation,
In those Oklahoma hills where I was born.

Now as I turn life a page to a land of great Osage,
In those Oklahoma hills where I was born.
Where the black oil rolls and flows and the snow-white cotton grows,
In those Oklahoma hills where I was born.

Way down yonder in the Indian nation,
I rode my pony on the reservation,

In those Oklahoma hills where I was born.
Way down yonder in the Indian nation,
A cowboy's life is my occupation,
In those Oklahoma hills where I was born,
In those Oklahoma hills where I was born.

©1945 Michael H. Goldsen, Inc.
©renewed 1973 Michael H. Goldsen, Inc.

COVER BLEMISH

My (November-December 1992) copy of *Oklahoma Today* arrived with my address label across the face of Will Rogers. I am a fan of Will Rogers as well as a person who saves my copies of *Oklahoma Today* for friends and school children to use. The covers are always colorful and meaningful. Can you not do something else?

**Florence McKinney
Manhattan, Kansas**

Alas, the label must now go on the cover. It should, however, cover the UPC bar code (a blemish itself), not the main cover image. If anyone receives a magazine with the label elsewhere, just call us. Our printer wants to know, and so do we—so we can get you a better copy.

ON GARTH'S BEHALF

Your article on Garth Brooks (January-February 1993) states that he

regrets not ever thanking the state of Oklahoma when accepting an award.

I am an avid Brooks fan with a good memory. I vividly recall that he did indeed thank "All the wonderful people of Oklahoma" after his first or second major award. I was proud of him for being so thoughtful. Of course, it would be okay if he did it again.

**E.F. Gilson
Bartlesville**

Thanks for setting the record straight for us and for Garth himself (who was feeling bad about the oversight).

OUR HERO

Thanks for the article on "The Man" Garth. We have such great performers from Oklahoma. Born and raised Okie myself. My family and friends enjoy the *Oklahoma Today*; I have a gift subscription for the year '93.

**Bert Smith
Garden Grove, California**

OOPS!

The credit on the photographs of Geronimo (March-April 1993) in his melon patch on page 35 and with Fort Sill soldiers on page 36 should read: Fort Sill Museum Archives.

In a recent
study, the
Mercedes-Benz
line ranked
higher in vehicle
dependability
than (your car here) .

Before you buy a car, it's a good idea to talk to some other car owners. J.D. Power and Associates surveyed over 22,000 of them. And Mercedes-Benz ranked best overall car line in Vehicle Dependability at five years of ownership.* So if you want a car you can depend on five years down the road, you have only one choice. For more information call 1-800-879-5937.

Benchmark



Mercedes-Benz

*J. D. Power and Associates 1993 Vehicle Dependability Index Study of original owners of 1988 model year cars. Based on things gone wrong to four to five-year-old model vehicles surveyed in the past twelve months. ©1993 Mercedes-Benz of North America, Inc., Montvale, N.J., Member of the Daimler-Benz Group

Indian Summer Festival '93 September 17-18-19



**Indian Fine Art
Competition & Exhibition
▲ Powwows for Youth and Adults
Invitational Lacrosse Tournament
Indian Food 🍲 Story Telling
★ Indian Summer Feast
Crafts 🎨 Games**

*Bartlesville
Community Center
Bartlesville, Oklahoma*



**Registration, Information and Tickets:
Call (918) 337-2787
For Accommodations, Groups
or Local Arrangements:
Call (918) 336-8708**



COOL STUFF

Whether you're on the road or on the porch, seven pleasures suitable for summer.



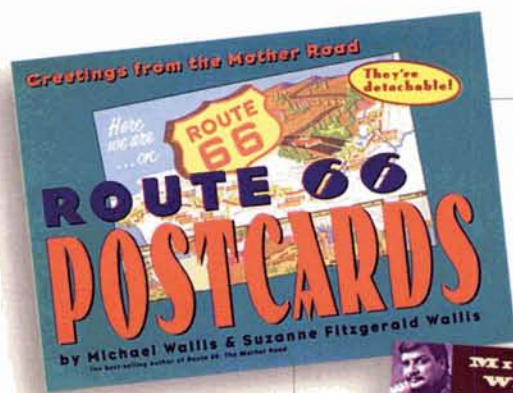
HOT! SUNFLOWERS

Summer and sunflowers are synonymous in Oklahoma, but lately *Helianthus annuus* seems like everybody's favorite flower—turning up on hats, sofas, and yes, even the pages of *Martha Stewart Living*. In Oklahoma, where it's considered as practical as it is perky, sunflowers never went out of style: we use them for both cattle feed and shade (some grow as tall as a house). Larry Stephenson has immortalized others in a poster series (bookmarks and stationery debut this fall). This print is \$30 unsigned, \$50 signed. Third Street Gallery, 111 N. Third, Ponca City, OK 74601. (405) 765-1757.

ROCKING IN THE WILLOWS

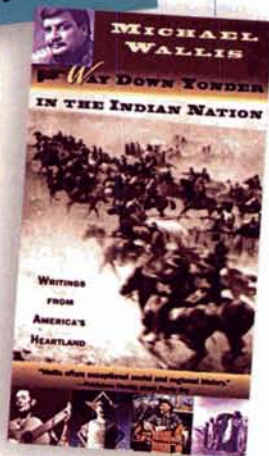
In Oklahoma, shade is a valuable commodity come July and August. Shade and a willow rocker? Let's put it this way: if you could bottle it, you'd be rich. Which could at least partially explain the success of Ozark Creations in Wyandotte, a family-owned and -operated company that since 1982 has made willow chairs, tables, and canopy beds to order. (Burlson grandsons collect the river willow from nearby ponds and streams; Burlson sons turn it into furniture.) Porch swings start at \$175; beds at \$500. Their best seller? Why, the rocker, of course, at \$125 (shade not included). Ozark Creations, Rt. 2, Box 4AB, Wyandotte, OK 74370, (918) 678-2697.

**Photography by
Dennis J. Holm**



A MICHAEL WALLIS SUMMER

Once the mercury tops 90, the only thing better than a cold drink, a chaise lounge, and a book by your favorite author, is all of the above and *two* books by your favorite author. Michael Wallis fans get just such a treat this summer, with the publication of *Way Down Yonder in the Indian Nation: Writings from America's Heartland* ("some of my favorite spoonfuls of Oklahoma") and *Route 66 Postcards: Greetings from the Mother Road* ("a love letter for the highway"), which the Tulsa writer co-wrote with his wife, Suzanne. *Route 66* from St. Martin's Press, \$8.95; *Way Down Yonder*, St. Martin's Press, \$18.95.



BOOTS AS OBJETS D'ART

To hold all those summer bouquets the cowboys bring ya, a four-inch-tall cowboy boot vase (\$5.50) from Frankoma Pottery, P.O. Box 789, Sapulpa, OK 74067, (918) 224-5511.



SADDLEBAGS FOR A CITY GIRL

Darryl Hannah, Naomi Judd, and Reba

McEntire have the red shoulder bag; Kevin Costner, the leather "Live the West"

luggage; Garth and Sandy, the "Wild West" coach bag (it's Taylor's diaper bag) shown here (\$160). What's next from Fairview's Cowboy Classics? T-shirts, wallpaper, appointment books, and more bags—all in (surprise) cowboy motifs. As always, they'll all be made in the U.S.A., right down to the leather straps by Bixby saddlemaker Stanley Allen. Cowboy Classics, 116 S. Main, Fairview, OK 73737, (405) 227-4307.

A HEART OF WOOD

Though the Burlsons of Ozark Creations will make anything from river willow that one is willing to finance, their line starts with something simple and sweet—a heart-shaped end table for \$50. Oh yes, if you drop by the family home in Wyandotte don't expect to browse; the Burlsons' creations sell so fast they rarely have any on hand. Better to call first. Ozark Creations, Rt. 4AB, Wyandotte, OK 74370, (918) 678-2697.



TURN UP THE AIR

The only place in the world where hand-held fans are possibly more ubiquitous than Japan would have to be Oklahoma, where Native Americans have, like the Japanese, turned fan-making into an art form. Created to stave off summer's stifling heat, fans, like this Cheyenne lady's fan (\$145), have endured as a vital part of powwow and ceremonial regalia. (It took some forty hours to make this one.) Choctaw Trading Post, 1500 N. Portland, Oklahoma City, OK 73107, (405) 947-2490.

TRADING

POST

Mug-o-Rama!

Oklahoma Today Twister Mug

Made in the U.S.A.
\$8.95 + shipping and tax.

Frankoma

Made by world-famous Frankoma Pottery, these mugs featuring Oklahoma's flag emblem come in four colors. Yours for only \$8.95 + shipping & tax.



Navy Teal Forest Bone



Pioneer Pride

1993 marks the 100th anniversary of the Cherokee Strip Land Run, a chaotic spectacle in which more than 100,000 pioneers made a mad dash for 42,000 land claims — the largest competitive event in American history.

Oklahoma Today commemorates the Cherokee Strip Centennial with these great T-shirts. (S, M, L, XL, and XXL)\$15.



Native Designs

Our popular Native America T-shirts come in three popular colors, each with a distinct Native American design. (S, M, L, XL and XXL) \$15.



T-shirt prices do not include shipping & tax (see below).

To order Oklahoma Today Trading Post items, please use the attached envelope & order form.

Colony Jamboree *Blowing the roof off the General Store.*

It is Saturday night in Colony, a sleepy little town with a population of 163, and it is a good thing that no one remembered to roll up the sidewalks, because they are crowded with people. In both directions, Main Street is jammed with pickup trucks and Lincoln Town Cars, and inside an old storefront, 140 pairs of toes are tapping to the Colony Pickers, the house band at the General Store Jamboree.

When she started this shindig three years ago, Cinda Rice, a motherly looking woman with more zip than a post office directory, wasn't looking to establish the hottest nightspot in three counties. All she was aiming to do was to fix up a place where her daughter Elwinna Hankins, her daughter's husband, her niece, and her niece's boyfriend could practice the songs they sang at church and for family gatherings. Rice rented what once was the town's general store and cleared a space big enough for a stage. "The first night we went down there and turned on the lights, twenty-five people came by. They saw the lights and wanted to know what was going on," says Rice. "You can't turn over a board in this town without someone knowing what you're doing."

Those twenty-five people sat down and listened

to the music. They came to the next practice, and the next, and before long, the General Store Jamboree was born.

Since then, two Saturday nights a month the Colony Pickers, a band made up of fifteen musicians (most are local, but some, like an Edmond chiropractor and a Clinton saxophonist who's retired from the big band circuit, drive in from out of town), play to a house that is almost always full. The band sticks to traditional country music: 1950s-era country standards, bluegrass, and gospel. Anyone who's got the yen to sing can get up on the stage, says Rice, although depending on who shows up, they may just get to sing one song. Rice makes it clear she expects a high moral tone to be maintained on stage. "I don't want no beer-drinking, two-timing, carousing, sex songs. No matter how religious they are, anyone can come to our show and feel comfortable."

Rice, who is a florist, has decorated the store with memorabilia, hanging baskets of flowers, and stage lights made out of light bulbs and fruit jars. She sells popcorn, soda, and the occasional homemade pie at the back, but she doesn't charge admission. She does accept donations, which she uses to pay the rent and to buy microphones and other sound equipment.

The music starts at seven p.m. on the first and third Saturday of each month and rarely lasts past ten p.m. Says Jimmy Gyles, a world champion Tahlequah fiddler and one-time Jamboree picker: "Most everybody wants to go home and get up in the morning for church."

Colony is on State Highway 54B in Washita County. It is so tiny you just can't miss the Jamboree nor the Colony Cafe, which opens from 5 to 9 on jamboree nights. Owner Debbie Lasley often serves specials like catfish, deep-fried chicken, or ribs. To talk with Cinda Rice, call (405) 929-7273.

—Barbara Palmer

Exporting Oklahoma! *Arizona got the movie, we got the song.*

On opening night, March 31, 1943, Curly let loose with a wild yee-haw, and a pair of high-stepping strutters pulling a silk-fringed surrey rumbled across the stage of New York City's St. James Theatre. Behind Curly, painted cornstalks sixteen feet high rippled and crackled on a backdrop of canvas.

The befringed Broadway surrey at rest where green grow the lilacs: at Rogers State College in Claremore.



Twelve years later the stand of corn was real and, indeed, once again as high as an elephant's eye, but beneath it, the ground was a suspicious black color.

"How you gonna invite a girl to a party?" newcomer-to-cinema Shirley Jones coyly asked as the movie cameras zoomed in.

"I been over to Claremore," Curly answered Laurey, flashing his Gordon MacRae smile, "and rented me a purty little surrey."

In the motion picture remake of Lynn Riggs's *Green Grow the Lilacs*, which became the hit Broadway musical *Oklahoma!*, the surrey-with-the-fringe-on-top created quite a stir. Five hundred square miles of Oklahoma had been finely combed by film makers, but not one section turned up a single panoramic sweep for the new wide-angle cinema in which a surrey was free to run. No flat land existed without an oil-derrick backdrop, skyscrapers, or shopping centers. No brilliant blue airspace remained free of the B-10s streaking in and out of Oklahoma's Tinker Airfield.

So Hollywood turned to Arizona, to Santa Cruz County to be specific, and a dry, one-thousand-acre desert spread. To deliver the authenticity demanded by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II (who delivered the Broadway hit), the sandy stretch north of Nogales, Arizona, was filled, irrigated, and fertilized. A ten-acre corn field (the film makers' vision of progressive 1900 Oklahoma) was

**On opening night,
October 11, 1955,
Governor Gary annexed
New York's Rivoli
Theater as Oklahoma
Territory for the two-
year run of the film.**

planted. The stalks were tended by experts to grow sixteen feet tall at a cost of \$8.95 per ear. An equally large (and impressive) wheat field was planted and nurtured, and fruit-bearing peach trees were carried in by the boxcar from Georgia to "Aunt Eller's farm."

And there was more: On the set's edge, a herd of 2,000 cattle (trucked in just for the filming) thundered. It took seventy trucks, helicopters, and a fleet of white Cadillacs to ready the rural backdrop necessary for Curly's wooing and surrey riding. And production did not commence without setbacks: a flash flood washed half a dozen of the Cadillacs down an arroyo (Curly's surrey with its spindly five-foot wheels survived unscathed).

All the activity in Arizona did not go unnoticed back in Oklahoma, where Governor Raymond Gary was more than a little protective of the Rodgers and Hammerstein production that bore his state's name. Longing to acknowledge that this thousand-acre oasis in Arizona was not so much Arizona as a high-dollar Oklahoma knock-off, Governor Gary telegraphed Earnest McFarland, governor of Arizona.

"It is my hope that you will see your way clear to cede (this land) to Oklahoma," he said.

Governor McFarland declined. McFarland, however, had forgotten one small thing: the landowners of the new, lush greenbelt. On August 25, 1955, the landowners wired Governor Gary, apologizing profusely for the behavior of their politicians and proposing to secede from the State of Arizona "and plant a flag of Oklahoma on the whole damn county of Santa Cruz."

"Nogales, Sonora, Mexico, supports us in our revolt!" they assured the Okla-



Act Fast!

Only 100 signed, stamped and numbered "Oklahoma!" posters in circulation! Respond NOW to this once-in-a-lifetime collector's opportunity by calling (405) 521-2496 or 1-800-777-1793.

Limited Edition

"Oklahoma!"

Commemorative Stamp Poster

On March 30, the U.S. Postal Service paid tribute to America's best-loved Broadway musical by issuing a commemorative stamp celebrating the show's 50th Anniversary. Now, for a limited time, *Oklahoma Today* and The Nigh Institute are offering this limited-edition collector's commemorative poster.

Autographed, Stamped, Numbered

Each poster is autographed by Ridge Bond—the Oklahoman who delighted Broadway audiences with his portrayal of "Curly"—and former



Governor George Nigh, who authored the bill to make "Oklahoma!" our state song.

Each limited-edition poster, designed by Scott Horton, features a canceled first-day-of-issue stamp and is numbered between 1 and 100.

Collectors of the signed, stamped and numbered posters also will receive a certificate of authenticity personally signed by Gov. Nigh and a commemorative "Oklahoma!" button.

Signed, numbered and stamped poster, framed as shown: \$150; unframed: \$100. Unsigned, unstamped poster, framed: \$45. Unsigned, unstamped poster, unframed: \$7.95.

Signed, Sealed, Delivered

Collect this souvenir set of four envelopes, each with a first-day-of-issue cover of the "Oklahoma!" 29-cent stamp. \$10. Also available: a button to boost your state pride—containing an actual "Oklahoma!" stamp protected by plastic coating. \$3.



For information about The Nigh Institute of State Government at the University of Central Oklahoma, write:
Nigh Institute
University of Central Oklahoma
Edmond, OK 73034-0170
or call (405) 341-2980, ext. 3360



Note: Prices do not include shipping and sales tax. For shipping and tax rates, please refer to the Oklahoma Today insert envelope & order form at the back of the magazine.



FULL CIRCLE VIDEOS

Native American Traditions on Tape

OKLAHOMA NATIVE
AMERICAN ARTISTS AND
MUSICIANS

- ⊕ SONGS OF INDIAN TERRITORY
- ⊕ CREEK ARTIST, KNOKOVTEE SCOTT
- ⊕ CHEROKEE BASKETMAKING
- ⊕ OSAGE RIBBONWORK

and just released...

⊕ "INTO THE CIRCLE"

An introduction to Oklahoma
Powwows and Celebrations

ALL TAPES \$29.95
for home viewing,
schools and libraries
MasterCard/Visa accepted

Catalogue available
1-800-940-8849

Full Circle Communications, Tulsa, OK

Pedro's SIRLOIN IN A SHUCK TAMALES™

"...these may well be the best Tamales
you have ever eaten!"

SHREDDED SIRLOIN BEEF, THE
PUREST SPICES, MASA FROM
STONE-GROUND CORN, HAND-
WRAPPED IN REAL CORN SHUCKS.
SHIPPED FROZEN IN A RE-USABLE
FOAM CONTAINER.

FAST BECOMING A
TASTY TEXAS
LEGEND.

NO PRESERVATIVES
VISA / MC / AE



PEDRO'S TAMALES, INC.
Lubbock, Texas 79452
1-800-522-9531
FAX 806-745-5833

homa governor, "Viva, Oklahoma!"

Taken aback by their enthusiasm (and the idea of a revolt) Governor Gary, ever the politician, proposed instead a summit meeting atop the observatory of New York's Empire State Building, the highest man-made point in the world. After all, hadn't Manhattan Island, home of the Empire State Building, been itself the object of one of America's greatest real-estate transactions?

**"That surrey
belongs in
Claremore!
After all,
Curly got it
here in the
first place."**

CAN'T GET TO OUR STORES? WE'LL COME TO YOU!

CALL OR WRITE AND WE'LL SEND YOU A FREE CATALOG
OF THE COFFEE VOTED "WORLD'S BEST"*

CALL 1-800-725-7315 OR MAIL TO:

NEIGHBORS COFFEE, P.O. BOX 581238, TULSA, OK 74158

*VOTED "BEST" AT
INTERNATIONAL
GOURMET SHOW
1991 & 1992



NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZIP _____

As was fitting, Governor Averell Harriman of New York presided over the summit to settle the land dispute between Arizona and Oklahoma, and negotiations did not conclude until respective Indian chiefs from the states of Arizona and Oklahoma shook hands on the deal.

When the movie finally opened on October 11, 1955, in New York City, Governor Gary trumped his Arizona coup by annexing New York's Rivoli Theater as Oklahoma Territory for the two-year run of the film. Four, blue silk flags flew above the theater's marquee, heralding the "Brand New State." Inside in the lobby, the Rivoli put on display a jar of red Oklahoma dirt.

Two years later, *Oklahoma!* ended its national tour, and that first surrey, so dear to Lynn Riggs's heart, trundled home to Claremore, Oklahoma, where it went on display at the Will Rogers Library. Two years passed, and the surrey settled permanently at Rogers State College—on the top floor of Myer Hall, once the Maurice Myer Barracks for the Oklahoma Military Academy.

Custom Micro Computers Statewide Sales & Service

featuring

DFI

&

ORSAIR

COMPUTERS

**We Carry a Full Line of
Laser & Dot Matrix Printers**

(405) 254-5022 or 1 (800) 536-5702

1222 10th St., Suite 105,

Woodward, OK • Clifford Meek, Systems Consultant

Was Oklahoma finally satisfied? Not quite. Randall Klemme, director of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce and Industry, pleaded for the surrey's movie-look-alike to return home, too. "That surrey belongs in Claremore! After all," he quoted a line from the play, "Curly got it here in the first place."

Magna Theatre Corporation, distributors of the landmark film, didn't agree. And so instead of returning home, the cinematic buggy in which Gordon MacRae wooed his lovely corn-fed lady disappeared with its "two bright side lights winkin' and a-blinkin'," into the Santa Cruz sunset.

You can catch *Oklahoma!* all over Oklahoma during the fiftieth anniversary of its Broadway debut. Outdoor performances play every night except Sunday through August 21 at the Discoveryland! amphitheater near Sand Springs. For ticket information and for reservations for a barbecue dinner beforehand, call (918) 245-6552.

Community theater groups that are tackling the musical include Ada Community Theatre, with performances scheduled for July 22-23. Call (405) 436-2282 for details. Enid's Gaslight Theatre will perform the play July 23-24 and 30-31; call (405) 234-2307 for information.

This fall, a national touring company will perform the musical in Tulsa (October 12-14) and in Oklahoma City (October 15-17) as part of a Broadway series. For ticket information, call (918) 596-7111 in Tulsa and (405) 297-3000 in Oklahoma City.

—Carolyn Wall

Rock Artists

A petroglyph exhibition puts impressionism on the rocks.

The nine members of the Oklahoma Society of Impressionists have traditionally used their canvases to present the colorful landscapes of Oklahoma and other settings they encounter in their travels. Jody Ellison is noted for her portrayals of the Philbrook Gardens and Woodward Park in Tulsa. Joan Marron has painted Santa Fe and Taos landscapes as well as the faces of Tibetans on a trek through the Himalayas.

Winding country lanes, sunlight and shadows on snow, the

final rays of a winter's sun, or meadows brimming with wildflowers appear in the works of Jerry McWilliams, Carla Perry, Wanda Beaty Brown, Herb Robb, Jay O'Meilie, and Claudia Kates Doyle.

So when society member Gary Moeller brought his idea of painting the state's numerous pictographs and petroglyphs—images that have been drawn, painted, or pecked on rocks—in the impressionist style of the society, "We all went 'What?! Why?'" recalls Ellison.

In Oklahoma, most of these remnants of the past, found on the walls of now-deserted caves, were rendered between 850 to 1400 A.D., at much the same time as those found at Mesa Verde in Colorado, Canyon de Chelly in Arizona, and Chaco Canyon in New Mexico. Oklahoma petroglyphs have been discovered high atop craggy bluffs, protected by the gnarled old bodies of overgrown trees, or isolated along nearly inaccessible stony shores of lakes and streams.

Though the marriage of aboriginal art and a style of painting that originated in Europe in the nineteenth century may seem odd on the surface, it makes sense, says Moeller, an art professor at Rogers State College in Claremore. "Impressionism is traditionally (thought of as) an outdoor means of painting. The rock art artists seem to have chosen these places for the landscape, the combination of rock, trees, and water."

In the Southwest, the tradition has its roots in the Anasazi culture, which used such paintings to help tribal members visualize their place and purpose in the universe. As that culture waned, the Pueblo Indians became the standard bearers for this form of art.

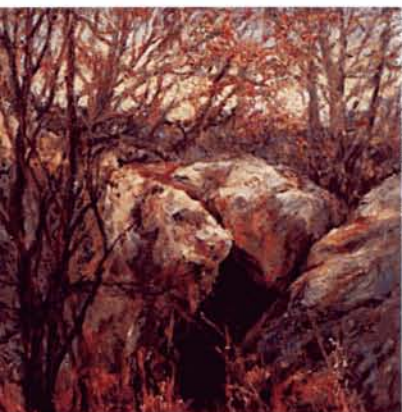
Though there are theories about the identity of the artists who painted on the caves of what's now Oklahoma, "We really don't know who did them," says Moeller, who prefers the words "before the white incursion" to the word "prehistoric." "There was a lot of trading between people and their art. These were resourceful and intelligent people who weren't at all restricted to doing what they did before. We know the cultures, and we know some relative times, but 'this particular culture was in this area' is as close as we can get."

Moeller, who travels to New Mexico as a crew chief in rock art expeditions, was introduced to Oklahoma rock art with cave drawings whose creators could, in fact, be identified: the eighteenth-century Osage Indians.

About twelve years ago, Moeller learned (through a colleague who is an anthropologist) of a cave where an Osage secret society conducted rituals. Though she wouldn't divulge the name or details about the society, the woman guided Moeller, his colleague, and others to the cave near Sand Springs. "When I saw for the first time the pictographs virtually hiding on a sandstone overhang near Sand Springs, I just knew there had to be more across Oklahoma."

Moeller started an art and archaeology class at Rogers State as a way to study these sites.

Moeller says the first site his class studied (which features two distinctively different styles of pictographs) has since



COURTESY WANDA BEATY BROWN

Wanda Brown's *A Secret Hiding Place* depicts the cave where nineteenth-century Osage held sacred rituals. Oil on canvas, 24 by 30 inches.

Lyon's INDIAN STORE



Largest Selection of Indian Goods and Oklahoma Souvenirs in Tulsa!



**Indian Jewelry
T-Shirts
Moccasins**



**Rugs • Pottery
Bronze Statues
Indian Art**

**Frankoma Pottery
Pendleton Blankets
Beads & Craft Supplies**

(Downtown Store Only)

TWO LOCATIONS

In Downtown Tulsa Since 1916
700 S. Main
Tulsa, OK 74119
(918) 582-6372
Hours: Mon-Fri, 9:30-5:30; Sat, 9:30-5

In Tulsa's Largest Shopping Mall
Woodland Hills Mall
7021 S. Memorial
(918) 250-3601
Hours: Mon-Sat, 10-9; Sun, 12:30-6

For You Who Love Your Home...

Wonderful new collections of fabrics, accessories, trims
and furniture at our always reasonable prices.

Stop in soon - we can't wait to
share the newest decorating
ideas with you.

Oak Leaf by **Judy Eden**
INTERIORS
and Antiques

**Over 1000
Wallpaper Books**

110 W. Main, Elk City, OK 73644 (405) 225-1100 / 1-800-466-1126

been assigned a state number by the Archaeological Survey at the University of Oklahoma. Since then, Moeller has visited sites in Pawnee, Mayes, Osage, and Rogers counties ("there are fifteen to twenty sites just around Claremore") as well as in the Panhandle. His guides have been as disparate as a highway patrolman, who led him to drawings near the Spiro mounds, and eighty-eight-year-old Truman Tucker, whom artist Joan Marron calls "a fabulous living history book" and most everyone else acknowledges as the Panhandle's resident historian.

"Rock art has become quite a popular thing of late," says Moeller. Since rock art literally is part of the environment, "It fits right into the environmental thing. Saving the art means leaving it alone."

The current interest is also due in part to the vulnerability of rock art, a fact that helped Moeller secure a grant from the State Arts Council of Oklahoma to fund the OSI pictograph/petroglyph project. Much of what was here has already been lost, says Moeller—some due to erosion and some due to development.

Archaeological research shows that the petroglyphs were not done in permanent living spaces. Most appear along waterways, situated where people could most easily gather for rituals. Since roads and railroads traditionally followed the rivers, too, many have been lost to bulldozers or were submerged when a river is dammed for flood control.

There are now laws that require sites be surveyed before public construction begins. "Treasure hunters and unauthorized construction are the biggest threats to the sites," Moeller says—which is why he is close-mouthed about the various locations where the paintings were done. "If someone is really interested, (the sites) are easy to find," he says. Even his intentions were scrutinized by the Osage guide, who questioned Moeller closely as they drove in a roundabout route to the cave.

Given the pictograph's vulnerability, Moeller's project is founded partly on pure pessimism. "It may be impossible

"It always seems that the scene you're trying to reach visually is somewhere where you have to tie yourself to a tree."

to preserve most of the art still in the original locations," says Moeller. "This is why documentation is so important."

Originally the OSI artists intended to focus their artistic impressions only on the landscapes that surrounded the paintings. But once their weekend sojourns to the sites commenced, the artists realized they had to tell the complete story and paint the pictographs as well. Even barbed wire and thistles, poison ivy, rattlesnakes, and the icy chill of winter did not deter them. "I think we all felt like pioneers," Ellison remarks. "These places are so hidden away, yet when we discovered them and the treasures they held, we knew we had discovered something really beautiful and historic."

Though impressionistic paintings project a soft image, most of the painters had already experienced discomfort for art. "We've all roamed around," says Wanda Beaty Brown of Owasso. "I've hung off the side of a cliff where I've nearly fallen into a river. It always seems that the scene you are trying to

reach visually is somewhere where you have to tie yourself to a tree."

For Brown, visiting the petroglyphs was a revelation, not because of their remoteness, but because of their content. "To think that right here under our very feet where we are so busy there are so many evidences of past life and of a culture so different. We became very excited about it and about Indian history."

Learning about the methods of the rock artists was a history and science lesson in itself. The brushes were often styli-peeled willow sticks, pieces of chewed cottonwood, or antelope hair tied to a stick. Charcoal, pulverized black stone, roots of black walnut trees, cottonwood seeds, or ashes combined with buffalo blood made the black/brown colors used in the drawings. The crushed flowers of the larkspur gave the artists blue. Chlorophyll from dried water plants or white maple bark boiled with roasted yellow ocher and wild grapes produced green. Buffalo gallstones, cattail pollen, wolf's moss, and fungus from trees provided a yellowish-green. Iron-bearing clay and white earth baked in a fire created red. Nature even provided the containers that held the pigments: shells, hollow stones, pots fashioned of clay, and box turtle shells.

The artists noticed a strong similarity to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century hide paintings done by the Plains Indians. Many of the motifs they found are also quite similar to the Anasazi drawings found in the Southwest centuries before. The Oklahoma sites yielded drawings of small human and animal figures, footprints and hand prints, triangles, circles, and other geometric-inspired motifs related to earlier cultures. Also plentiful are drawings of lizards, bighorn sheep, birds, deer, and corn.

Somewhere along the way, an exercise that started out as a "project to interest a small public," began to mean more.

"The (original) artists believed so much in a spiritual power. It isn't just talk, you know," says Brown. "The more we worked on them, the more we were just pulled into that part of history."

"I think we're here not so much to tell our own story as to do art and bring something special to today's people, to help them appreciate the world."

The OSI show, *Impressions of Oklahoma Prehistory*, will be on exhibit at the Gilcrease Museum from July 30 to August 31. The museum is at 1400 Gilcrease Road in Tulsa. For information, call (918) 596-2700.

—M.J. VanDeventer



Joan Marron's *Did You Get My Message? of a Panhandle petroglyph*, Oil on canvas, 16 by 20 inches. Petroglyphs in Cimarron County span thousands of years.



PREMIERE SEASON

AMERICAN Music Festival

July 23-25, 1993

Peter Simon, Artistic Director

A CELEBRATION OF

★ **AMERICA** ★

*Through Its Music, Dance,
and Dramatic Arts*

Jazz • Broadway • Classical

AMERICAN MUSIC FESTIVAL OFFICE
717 West Willow Avenue • Suite 6 • Duncan, OK 73533-4959

CALL: (800) 255-0909



ACROSS THE RANGE

COURTESY WILL ROGERS MEMORIAL ARCHIVES



Close your eyes and imagine: an aerial view of the original barn on the old Rogers homeplace outside Oologah.

Where There's a Will, There's a Way: *An Amish Barn Raising*

When the directors of the Will Rogers Birthplace began making plans to erect a barn that wouldn't have looked out of place more than a hundred years ago, they turned to a group of people who would have fit right into the 1870s themselves.

On July 17 at Dog Iron Ranch near Oologah, members of the Amish community near Chouteau will raise the walls of a rough-sawn native oak barn designed to look like the one owned by Clem Rogers when his son Will was born there in 1879.

The barn's look will be as historically accurate as possible, says project spokesperson Michelle Lefebvre-Carter, but its construction will make concessions to modern regulations and needs, including restrooms, a classroom, some living quarters, and ramps that will make the barn accessible to everyone. Once completed, the barn will be home to barnyard animals such as young Will might have fed and watered.

Three Amish carpenters, headed by Clarence Miller of Chouteau, will begin work in late June, laying a native stone foundation and framing the barn in native timber. On July 17, they will be joined by a crew of about fifteen men who will raise the walls with ropes and pulleys (remember the scene from

THE
Make Holiday Shopping a little easier this
OKT
year for nearly 150,000 Very Important
HOLIDAY
Readers. Advertise your retail, mail order or specialty
GIFT
gifts in Oklahoma Today's November/December '93
GUIDE

Holiday Gift Guide. Call today for rates & information:

(405) 521-2496 / (800) 777-1793.

Hurry! Space Reservation Closes August 13!

the movie *Witness*?). An old-fashioned Amish lunch of roast beef, chicken, green beans, homemade rolls, lemonade and tea, and apple and cherry pie will be served by women in long blue dresses and bonnets.

Since the Amish don't own telephones or drive automobiles, engaging the carpenters required a bit of ingenuity. "We know the man who owns the telephone company in Chouteau," says Lefebvre-Carter. "He passed messages along." And each day during the barn's construction, someone from Chouteau will drive the carpenters to Oologah and back.

Since the religious community generally eschews publicity and commercial enterprises, Lefebvre-Carter thought there was a good chance the project would be turned down. The reverse proved to be true. "They think it is an honor because of Will Rogers," she says. "It was so sweet how they accepted."

Since the Amish don't own telephones or drive automobiles, engaging the carpenters took a bit of ingenuity.

The Will Rogers Memorial Commission will sell tickets (\$25 each) for admission to the birthplace and for lunch. Trick ropers, old-time music, cowboy poetry, and a Will Rogers one-man show by Lance Brown are also planned. At 2 p.m., the birthplace will be reopened to the general public. That evening the Will Rogers Memorial in Claremore, where another performance by Brown is planned, will be open until 9 p.m. Ticket sales are limited to 350 people. (918) 341-0719.

—Barbara Palmer



"The Storyteller"
Oil, 16 x 20

Joan Marron
OSI, PAPA



DODSON GALLERIES
7660 North Western
Oklahoma City, OK 73116
405-840-7787
Hours: 10:00 - 5:00

Indian Territory Gallery
Oklahoma's Finest
FEATURING OKLAHOMA'S FINEST
NATIVE AMERICAN ARTISTS.
Paintings • Bronze • Alabaster • Pottery
Baskets • Jewelry • Rugs • Prints
1030 EAST TAFT, SAPULPA, OK 74066
918/227-2050 OR 800/466-1409

MIDSUMMER NIGHTS' FAIR
July 9-10
6 p.m. - midnight
"Something for Everyone!"
Fine Arts & Fine Crafts Booths
Art Auction
Free Entertainment
Dalmatian Mascot Competition
Food Booths
Firehouse Art Center
(405)329-4523 444 S. Flood, Norman
Funded by Norman Convention and Tourism Committee

A photograph of a small, red-painted wooden building, possibly a roadside diner or grocery store, nestled in a lush green forest. A large, thick tree trunk is in the foreground on the left, with its branches extending over the building. The building has a gabled roof and a single window with white shutters. On the roof, there is a large, rectangular sign with a yellow background and black lettering. Below the roofline, there are three small white signs with black text. To the right of the building, a vertical sign is partially visible. The background is filled with dense green foliage and trees.

MC/DONA d'S GROC PY
RESTUAR N
LI CH BU G

PLATE LUNCHES DAILY

SACK LUNCHES

SHORT ORDERS

GROCERY
ICE



As folks in Tom (pop. 250) well know, there's a time for leaving & a time for coming home.

Mary Jo McDonald sat in the kitchen half of McDonald's Grocery and Kitchen in Tom, Oklahoma. The lunch special was mashed potatoes and gravy, greens, steak fingers, and purple hull peas. The noon group—whites, blacks, farmers, ranchers, retired people, and kids—had mostly been fed, and the sun had come out, leaving the late-winter day only nip-chilly. The letter, clipped from an Idabel newspaper, lay in front of her on one of the four tables of the little cafe. Mary Jo declined to look at it or pick it up. "I didn't do it deliberately," she said. "I don't guess I was really aware of doing it."

"The people of Tom, Okla.," the letter said, "wish to express a special appreciation to one of our most loved citizens, Mary Jo McDonald. Thanks for taking the time to teach your skills to others. Thanks for all the fine food you prepare each day. Thanks for your love and concern for our elderly, both black and white, and for sharing your flowers and shrubs with all your neighbors."

ATown Called



By Ralph Marsh

Photography by David
Fitzgerald

*Marshall and Mary Jo
McDonald's Grocery and Kitchen
in Tom: three generations of Mary
Jo's family have run the store.*



This fishing hole near Tom is on private land, but "Everybody fishes it when they get ready to," says Marshall McDonald.



There had been anonymous letters before: "To someone who's always there with smiling eyes her gift to share, to turn a loaf or bake a pie or

Mary Jo McDonald left Tom in 1949, but came back twenty-one years ago. "I can't imagine dying anywhere else."

soothe a baby when it begins to cry. To share a flower, to deliver a meal. Working daily to do God's will." But this letter had been received by the Idabel newspaper. The publisher had turned it into a column, and it had been read by people all over the county. And now it lay on the table, making Mary Jo McDonald increasingly uncomfortable in her own kitchen.

Her husband, Marshall, grinned at her discomfort. Mary Jo's eyes flicked to the faces around the room. There was no hint whether the writer was black, white,

young, old, well-to-do, or poor. "It's just," she said, "that I can never remember not being happy here. I can't imagine being anywhere else at this time in my life."

With a sudden little-girl look, she reached for her jacket, gestured to her visitor, and disappeared out the back door.

NOTHING IF NOT ITSELF

State Highway 3 tiptoes from Idabel down the backstairs of McCurtain County into Arkansas, a bare five miles short of Texas. It is Oklahoma's least-

Community Chit Chat

known portion of the Ouachita National Forest. Old Choctaw planter country. Old cotton country. Old slave country. Trees crowd in near the road, and spring-fed streams lie lazily in their beds, turning warm in the summer sun, looking bassy, snaky. Low ground between the sand hills is springy, like the floor of a house so old it moves underfoot and can be gotten to swaying. Pines are arrows thrown by the handful into the floor of a green-lit cathedral. Names change from the Cucumber and Boktukulo and Eagle creeks of the Ouachita Mountains to Mud Creek, Walnut Bayou, Red Slough. Lean-tos sit close to the road, unsplit wood scattered in the yard. An old car. Two. A Shetland pony tied by a rope to a tree in a front yard to graze on grass unmowed from last summer. Bittersweet wistfulness of country too beautiful to be so poor.

The last turn that shoots Highway 3 east into Arkansas is called Tom. "All I know about it," said the clerk in the convenience store in Idabel, twenty-five miles north, "is that it is a colored town."

Mary Jo McDonald has about her the perpetual fresh cleanness of someone who spends time in the kitchen without calling it hard work and the easy goodness of those who have no doubt they are where they are supposed to be at this moment, doing what they are supposed to be doing: "I have salesmen come down from Oklahoma City and Dallas. One, I asked, 'Would you like a cup of coffee?' And he said, 'Oh, no, I don't have time.' I said, 'What did you come after, a coal of fire?' He said, 'I have my orders from the home office to get in and out of here just as fast as I can.'"

Mary Jo shook her head at the very idea of such a life, then put her hands on her hips and took a deep breath, looking down the path through a small woodland where memories hung like Spanish moss from the limbs of big water oaks and sweet gums. She walked to where a little spring-fed creek widened into a clear hole of water. "All the sins of Tom, Oklahoma, are in that hole," she said. "We kids cleaned it out and chucked the snakes out of it for a swimming hole, and it was so pretty the adults took it over. We call it the Old Baptizing Hole."

"My dad, Charles E. Weathers, came down here in 1904. A lot of people depended on him to kind of lead the community. He and my mother met and married, and they had thirteen children. I was the thirteenth. And then his sister and her husband died in the flu epidemic, and he was the only surviving relative, so he went to western Oklahoma and got their nine kids, every one of them, and brought them home—and then there were twenty-two of us in that house. They didn't have welfare back then. He raised them as if they were his own. Maybe we were poor. We didn't know. Nobody told us. The thing I have never been able to forget is the house was always full."

Mary Jo gestured up the slope at an old tin-roofed house; in the old yard one could see what once was her momma's garlic and the crape myrtle with branches melded into a three-foot-thick trunk that was once a cutting given by a neighbor. "There wasn't any seed supply then or nurseries. What one woman had in her yard, everybody had. I have people come up now, and they think the yard is pretty and the flowers are pretty, and we break off some limbs and take some cuttings, some roots, or dig them up. My mother was like that. My daddy was like that, too. And that is how it is again here now. When I was living in the cities after I left home, I was kind of ashamed to tell people I was from Oklahoma or from a little country place like this. After I was away for a little while, I shouted it."

She stopped suddenly and faced her questioner. "Everybody knows everybody here," she said, "and everybody cares." And she shrugged and walked back through the woods toward the kitchen half of McDonald's Grocery and Kitchen.

JUST TOM

Tom is a neat little town. Trim. Population is about 250 most days. It feels safe. Easy. The area is estimated to be ninety percent black, ten percent white; ninety percent welfare, ten percent retirement. Many of the blacks are direct descendants of slaves brought up the Trail of Tears by Choctaw Indian planters. Most of the whites are descendants of the early settlers who worked for and with the

We couldn't say when the *Tom News* began arriving at our office (Pastor Wesner sends it free to those who ask and some who don't), but we do know we've come to anticipate the arrival of the little mimeographed newspaper published monthly by the First Baptist Church of Tom and to feel a bit closer to the townsfolk of Tom (a place we've never visited) for having read it.

If the truth be known, no matter how open throttle our life is running, we never miss Mary Jo McDonald's column, "Community Chit Chat," in which the births, deaths, good deeds, and tiffs that have held the town of Tom together for these many years are gracefully chronicled.

We feel better, somehow, knowing there's still a place in the world where people leave fresh, ripe tomatoes on their neighbor's back step.

Here are a few favorite excerpts...

October, 1992

Johnnie Wicker is up and around—very carefully. Eddie is the best nurse one could have.

Met the Selfs' new grandbaby. She was being passed from pew to pew. Couldn't really tell who she belonged to.

Linda Davis called and she thought, along with others, that the obituary of William Hall was our Willie. After a phone call, I can assure you he is alive and well. I know several saw him at the fair.

We visited with Bo Ward, and he has a lot of good junk. He is going into the antique business. Also, he has the best-looking unplanted pea patch I have ever seen. He and Lewis Dillahunt mowed his garden and after the rains he has a better garden that came up on its own.

We killed two baby snakes this week. Willie Mae Clowers says they are blind this time of year.

John D. and Ruby Galloway visited with a jar of pear butter; when we visited she showed us where a little wren had built a home in her hanging plant.

The gophers and moles are thicker than I have ever seen. We can't find bait in Idabel. Seems everyone is having the same problem...

Much love, God bless.

(continued on page 27)

Indians and then bought them out. Most families have known each other—black and white—since the turn of the century. Some run cattle. There are a few jobs at nearby Foreman, Arkansas; Idabel, Oklahoma; and Texarkana, Texas. Some drive as far as Valliant to be able to survive and still live in Tom. The last direct descendant of the old Choctaw slaveholders has moved away, but he stays in touch.

Ralph Mitchell recently opened Tom's

newest business, Mitchell's Pawn and Gun. He is a gentle-eyed man who likes colorful sports shirts, young people and old folks, and who does no talking about his days in the Vietnam War. He was born where the new Baptist Church now stands, when a big old gingerbread house stood there. His wife, Ramona, says it looks like they are back in Tom for life. "I think he's probably seen all he wanted to see, and he's probably gone all the

places he wanted to go."

"This little community," Mitchell said, "when they came in and cleared the land around here, the topsoil was deep. They made good cotton here in the hills. There were no boll weevils. Then the land was totally depleted, and the boll weevil arrived, and native grass was all it would grow. Why come back? It was just a feeling. I wanted to come back home. Where my roots were."



At Tom's senior citizens' center, built by the townsfolk with fish fries and bean suppers, are: top row, from left, Paul Denny; former director Kay Lee; Cal Andrews; and bottom, from left, Rachael Knight; Martha Parks; and Levisie Thomas.

November, 1992

Leaves are turning and falling faster than we can rake them up. Everyone says make compost. It would take a football field to take care of these. You forget when they turn green in the spring.

Celie and Kerrie Murray were involved in an accident with C.B. Knight. Someone needed the stop sign for decoration. Both are fine now.

I heard Sharon Wade is a grandma (twice). Jerry Joe has twin girls. Don't know how old they are, and I just heard.

We can tell deer season is going to start. Everyone is shooting at trees to sight their guns. Gary told Amber he was getting ready to shoot Bambi. Didn't go over very well.

Winnie Hunkapiller had eye surgery. Ivalene Hurst helps her and puts drops in them for her.

Our community lost our oldest black lady, Rachael Knight. Her family has been like an institution here. I know she was close to a hundred or more. She will be missed.

Nelda and John Grant come by when they aren't in the hay field.

Rich McDonald and wife visited for the weekend. Robert Chadwick brought over a big sack of hot peppers that I shared with Nellie.

Nellie Pierce, Pat Rea, Willie Mae Clowers, and I took a trip to Broken Bow and DeQueen and Nash on our way to Hope, Arkansas, so Nellie could see where Bill Clinton was born, and we have pictures to prove it.

Robert Bridges, Johnny Hurst, and Bill Severn are keeping the porch bench warm.

We heard from Pam Moody, and her baby girl has a new name. It is No-No!

Another hen came off with five babies and another is setting in a brush pile. I know this is the season to be thankful, but someone up there hates me.

I have talked to several people about pecans. They tell me they are scarce. My tree has a few for the first time, and the squirrels and I are having a race to see who gets them first.

Happy Thanksgiving—God Bless.

February, 1993

Finally got the Christmas tree down, much to Amber's dismay. According to her, Santa Claus will never be back. Everyone seems relieved it is over for another year. Max Cleveland was so good to help put up the lights around the back

(continued on page 29)

Tom hasn't always been a town. Back around the turn of the century, a man named Tom Stewart put in a little store near Pine Creek to provide groceries, sociability, and hardware. People would simply say they were going to Tom's. And time shortened even that. They built a community, planted something that could not be named. Beautiful country where life was simple and good, creeks and feelings clear and deep, and a man didn't feel easy if his neighbor was in need.

And to this day, Tom asks for and gets no federal funds. It has no city limits. No city employees. No police. "Someone calls the sheriff's department if there is time. If it gets rough and they start breaking the store windows, somebody would show up with a gun right quick and quell it."

"That's what happened next door, remember? When this man was beating up on his wife, Jerry Galloway and all of them came down with rifles. There was no firing. The man quit. He took off."

Juvenile problems are handled by whoever happens to be present ("I'll spank you like you were one of my own!"). No doctor. No ambulance. And five fully qualified emergency medical technicians. "Mark Kates, who runs the store right here next door, Kates Grocery, attended all the schools and everything and passed the state examinations. His younger brother, Roger, he got qualified. He lives next door here. Jerry Galloway is qualified. Max Cleveland, Bob Grant are qualified."

There is no city council. Folks just gather at the Pierce Community Center. Whatever comes up, they meet, take a vote. Do it. Or don't do it. No local laws. The board of directors of the community center (elected by a show of hands) sets the rules for use of the center (with the advice and consent of the populace), and they clear up any other town problems while they are all there together. The Volunteer Fire Department and the Cemetery Association work with the board.

The center was built with Tom money and by Tom hands. Citizens donated money for the land. "We had fish fries. We had pie and cake auctions. When there was a political campaign under way, we invited all the candidates to come down, and we would have a political speaker and we would auction off a couple of pies and

we would have another political speaker and we would auction off another couple of pies...We'd have five or six hundred people. The politicians loved it."

The center is named for Obie Pierce who kept everybody at it until it was done. As one of his last contributions before he died, Obie came back to Tom from Idabel.

Tom isn't incorporated and has no mayor. "You have to have a mayor—have a certain standard—before you can get a license for a liquor store. So we're not going to have any mayor." Tom has a modern volunteer fire department that has given the area an enviable fire-insurance rating for a town of its size. Everything is run by the people of the town of Tom. By Tom rules. Since no outside money comes in, neighbors bear no outside directives. "It is so rural that if a highway patrolman drives through, everybody wonders where the wreck's at. And the phone will start ringing."

THE MIGRATION HOME

On a day too wet and windy to fool around long with the cattle, Glynn Stevens leaned back from one of Mary Jo's tables and studied the long-familiar faces that peopled the little cafe before he turned back to the visitor and attempted an answer. "I know what you are talking about," said the Tom native, "but I can't put my finger on it. I think a lot of it is because people came back here because they wanted to, not because they had to. And we can kind of remember how things were back when."

Stevens is a big man. Quiet. He left Tom to coach basketball and teach in Dallas, Texas. When he retired and came back, he and Patsy built their home on a hill out west of Tom's stores. "Everybody in this community, if there is a need, they will respond. There is a certain amount of envy, sure, anyplace you go, but we have worked real hard to eliminate the envy among each other. And we are all, well...this is the kind of community it is: Seven years ago, I got a real pretty, red-and-white barn, and I was really proud of it. I had filled it full of hay, had 250 of these big rolls of hay in it. I put some of them in there too green, and it went through a heating process and caught on

fire and burned the whole thing up. And it was getting close to the fall of the year, and there wasn't much hay left. I went outside one day, and there were 30 rolls of hay laying out in my pasture. That's \$20 a roll. Then this guy called me and said, 'I've got a meadow I don't need. If you want to bale it, bale it.' And in six to eight weeks' time, I had restored all that hay.

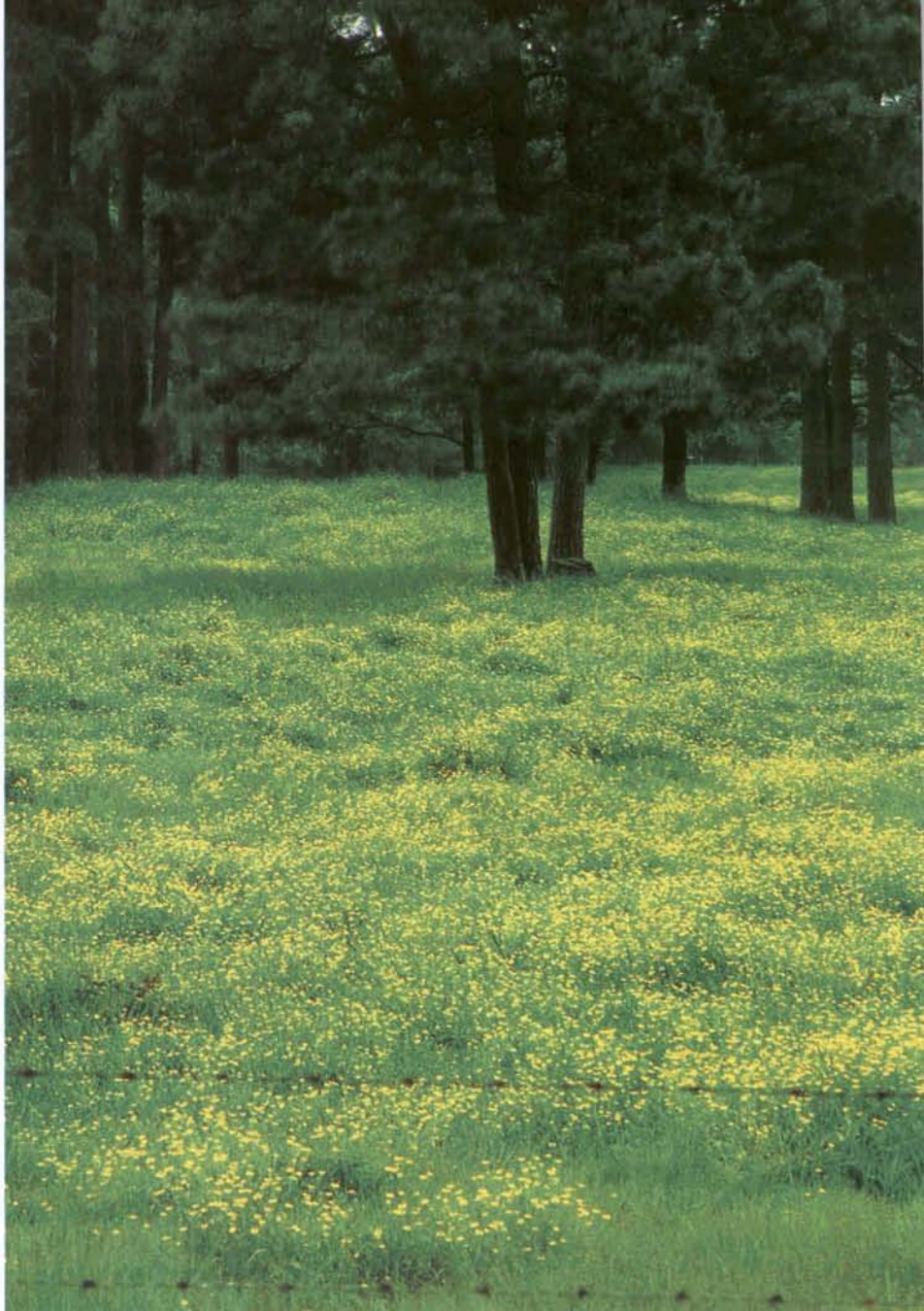
"We might get a little crossways occasionally, but if there is a real need, everybody responds to it."

Mary Jo closed her eyes and tilted her head back, mentally visiting friends: "Ralph and Ramona Mitchell. Vesta and Harvey Dillard went to California," she said, "were gone for several years and came back. Billy and Edna Severn came back in about '81. Cleo and Pauline Baker. James and Syble Baker. Mamie and Gordon Grant..."

Loneliness flickered in her eyes, faint as distant lightning. "They left and came back and established a farm, had a little store across the road. They are both deceased now. We've lost so many of our really strong people. Harvey Dillard. The old people. Earnie and Iva Webb. We just had her funeral. They were in the oil fields for years, and they came back. She was always just Granny. He was always just Grandpa.

"We are trying to be careful with the old ones we have left," Mary Jo said. (Things Mary can't say, she sneaks into her newspaper column: "I miss Aunt Zona Wade. I look for a light in her house when I drive by. I keep remembering the times I could have visited—not enough time—I thought.") "We've had people come in down here and they say everybody is nosey. They're not. They are concerned. If they don't see you every day, they want to know why. If you're sick they want to know that, too. When there's a problem, a death or a sickness in the community, everybody falls together."

By the time Mary Jo McDonald was nineteen years old, she was married and she had two children, and the world was in the frantic Forties, and small towns were no place for anybody who wanted to be somebody to be. "Everybody in town was in a hurry to get somewhere, to leave, to go. 'Oh, Lord, if I can get out of there, I'll never come back.'"



The pine and hardwood landscape around Tom.

She and her husband took their children and left, and for the next twenty-five years or so they lived in Houston, Oklahoma City, Dallas, and California. She raised six children and became cooking supervisor for Zuider Zee Seafoods in Oklahoma City and Dallas, and cooked in one of the best Mexican restaurants in San Antonio. And then her cousin Phillip Weathers died back home. He had sort of taken over for her brother, Jeff, who had sort of taken over for her father. And for the first time almost since its beginning, there were no Weathers in Tom. "We came back for the funeral. I drove past the old home place, and it had grown up; the windows were broken out. My best girl-

friend came by. I went over to the cemetery with her. We got to looking at how many people we went to school with were already gone.

"And, I don't know, I just had to come back. The roots to the chain that held the family together—we were losing it. There comes a time when you've got to get some roots down, and, well, just have a place to die. Phillip died in December of 1973, and I moved back the following June. It took me that long to get the old house ready. We lived in it for eight years. When we built our new home, we left the old house so that when our family comes home they can stay there instead of a motel."

And her family has begun to come back.



Her son, Gary, and his family now live in the old house, and they wander the woods together, gathering pine knots, watching out for old cemeteries, daffodils, and each other. "You come home to retire," she said, "just to live out your life. And then you find you are working harder than you have ever worked before."

Mark Kates is a vigorous young man of thirty-two who is calculating his grocery stock electronically in the modern, well-stocked market that sits across the dirt road from McDonald's store. He is watching the clock to keep from being late to peeewee baseball practice. Mark's parents took their turn away from Tom for him, so Mark has never had to leave. Mark was born in Texas. Then the family came back to Tom. "I was seven years old," said Mark. "That was twenty-five years ago."

Mark became certified as an EMT because of his children. He worried because there was no doctor and the nearest ambulance was a half-hour away. Then it became much more than that. "I'm a volunteer fireman at Tom because I'm down here twelve hours a day, but I live up by Haworth. So I get called out down here in the daytime and up there at night. Everybody has to kind of pull their own, do their part. This is just one of the things I do. We have to. You can't very well have a person pulling two people's share.

"There's not a lot of money available. If we have any, we usually raise it ourselves. You're not so anxious to fuss over money if you have to work for it yourself. We haven't had that problem."

And what is a young man's ambition for Tom? "Don't change it...The reason it is the way it has been since the turn of the century here is we don't have a lot of industry, and therefore we don't have a lot of people from across the state and the nation. We don't have a big mix. We just have the same people. If they were to put in a factory or a mill near here that would employ thirty thousand people, then this area would never be the same, and I like

Mel-Pah Richman lived in Tom for forty years, teaching piano and turning her hand to whatever needed to be done, says Mary Jo. She died early last fall. "We really lost somebody when we lost her," said Mary Jo. "Her son-in-law said that before she died, she told him to remind everybody to vote."

(continued from page 27)

of the church, but the fire truck ladder just wouldn't reach far enough to put lights on the crosses.

It finally dried up enough for us to make our yearly trip into the woods. Amber couldn't understand why, but she sang all the way. I pulled up twelve dogwood trees, the ground was so soft. Jimmy and I went over and planted Ivalene Hurst's. If they don't live, we are both in trouble. Judy Storey is next.

Jean Stone has been under the weather. We miss her music on Sunday.

Louise and Robert Chadwick had company over the weekend.

Some of the older ones gathered at the store this week reminiscing, maybe it was because the lights went off for a few hours. When the Dennys had the store, I don't think they had lights. Maybe that is why our crime rate was so low—no one could see where to rob.

Finally got my tulips muddled in this week. They may rot—it has rained since November. Carla Kates said she gave up and planted hers too.

My chickens have moved to Irene Strube's and Johnny Stanfield's. (Thank you, Lord. You do answer prayers.)

Lavada Severn called, and Granny Iva Webb left us today. Our special old loved ones are all moving home much too frequently. Makes you wonder what this old world will be like when we have to move. We have to keep reminding ourselves what a wonderful perfect world that was given to us to take care of. Time is so precious.

I think Clark Kates is angry with me. He got a BB gun for Christmas and wanted to kill birds. Don't think they were in very much danger, but I told him he shouldn't kill things he couldn't eat—to put up a target or a row of cans. He didn't seem too excited.

Mary Hoover attended church and looked so different. I didn't recognize her.

Five a.m.: Can't sleep. I believe the old saying, "You need less sleep with age," but I know I need more than Robert and Ora Bridges. They are up at four every day.

Sheila Kates is in the hospital in Texarkana—(pneumonia). Myrtle Adams fell and broke her hip and is in Paris after surgery. Mike Chadwick watched too much wrestlin' on T.V. and body-slammed Anna. She now has a broken collarbone.

Johnny Stanfield's little hen is setting, trying to have a family. I hope they aren't the boiled eggs Becky put out there.

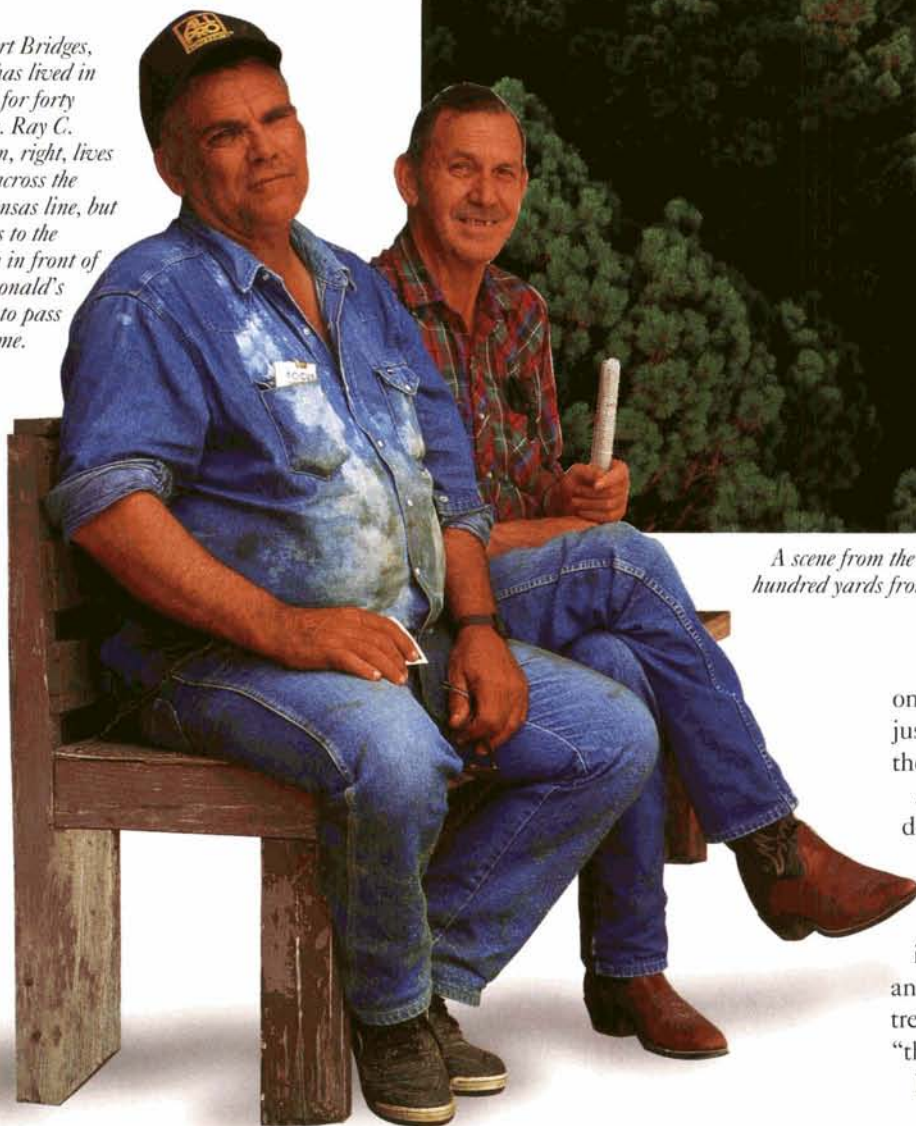
God Bless...

it the way it is, or I would have left when I was twenty years old myself."

EVERYONE'S FAMILY

Henry "Bo" Shoals is a quiet, graying black man who was born seventy-five years ago "right down the road from where I live." He lives three mailboxes past Walnut Bayou, down past Pine Creek, in the edge of the still-rich bottoms just south of the Tom stores. He is mostly retired from farm labor, although he still looks after Carla Mitchell's cattle. He has lived in Tom all his life because, "Everybody treated me nice." He and his wife, Morel, had seven children. Raised four. They—and the community of Tom—are proud of them. "Only one white man ever treated me bad," he said. "He put a gun on me. He was good. I worked for his daddy, and I worked for him. But he got

Robert Bridges, left, has lived in Tom for forty years. Ray C. Mann, right, lives just across the Arkansas line, but comes to the bench in front of McDonald's store to pass the time.



A scene from the Tom fire tower. Though the tower is only a few hundred yards from Tom, "You can't see Tom for the trees," says photographer David Fitzgerald.

on that dope and stuff. And then he was just a bad man." Somebody finally killed the man, somewhere up north.

A Baptist, Bo doesn't play dominoes, doesn't shoot dice, doesn't gamble, and doesn't go driving down the road drinking. He says the younger generation now pretty well runs things in Tom. "Young folks are taking over, and they know how to meet folks and treat folks." They have forgotten, he said, "the old slavey-time ways."

Has he ever in those seventy-five years,



considered leaving Tom? "Sometimes," he observed, "you can leave a place and worsen yourself."

HOME SWEET HOME

And so it is, driving State Highway 3 south out of Oklahoma, down past Moon and Bokhoma and America, that Tom comes suddenly upon the unaware. The old house on the right there, with the sheet-iron roof, is Mary Jo's old home, the old Weathers Place. Next door, the big, handsome gray brick is Mary Jo's new house, built after she and Marshall came back and bought the old "jot-em-down" store her daddy used to run.

Up on the hill there to the left, is

Mitchell's Trading Post and Pawn Shop. Ralph and Ramona built the red-brick there in front of it when they came back from California and Tokyo and Vietnam and other points around the world. Ralph and Ramona's daughter, Carla, lives in the big stone house next door. Back on the right, next door to Mary Jo, the sand-brick house belongs to Roger and Sheila Kates.

Then there is Nellie Pierce's Tom Cafe. Nellie Pierce is a newcomer, a Colombian who married a man from Tom while he was working in Colombia, South America. She was kind and generous and caring. He got killed in the oil field. The government tried to send her back to Colombia. Tom gathered into the biggest town meeting of its history and told the government that she was qualified to be a citizen of Tom—and would be for so long as she chose, voted by the people with a show of hands.

People come from three states to sit at one of the tiny cafe's few tables. Next door to Nellie's is the Tom Laundromat owned by Roger and Mark Kates. Their grandfather and grandmother this year celebrated their sixty-first anniversary in their house across from the store. Their great-grandfather came to Tom from Arkansas in the early 1900s.

Pierce Community Center is just behind the Texaco station. Its only employee is Syble Baker. James Baker left Tom during World War II, and sometime after that, Syble went to Oklahoma City. When James Baker got out of the service, he went to Oklahoma City, married Syble, and they both came home in 1946 and haven't left since.

After turning left, the brick house is Nellie's, then the Tom School. And then the forest sets in again, impenetrable in places to the unknowing eye. But if you look closely, you can see them. The daffodils. Tracing farmyards that are not there anymore. There where the last turn shoots State Highway 3 toward Arkansas. The old home places still are there. 

Ralph Marsh of Hearstener logged so much time in Tom for this story that locals began referring to the gray-haired writer as, "That boy." Photographer David Fitzgerald of Oklahoma City, like Marsh, gets to southeastern Oklahoma as often as life allows.



Getting There

Tom is five miles from the Oklahoma-Arkansas state line on S.H. 3. The town's epicenter, McDonald's Grocery and Kitchen, is on the northwest corner of the town's crossroads. The cafe opens at 8 a.m. and closes at 4:30 p.m. every day except Thursday and Sunday. Cook Bonnie Combs makes sandwiches, including her special "Bonnie's Burgers" daily, along with a lunch special that comes with homemade rolls. (Catfish, ribs, and fried chicken turn up regularly.) The store telephone number is (405) 245-2545. The Tom Cafe, next door to the grocery, is open from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. Owner Nellie Pierce's specialty is the "Tom Dinner": enchiladas, refried beans, rice, tostado, taco, and guacamole salad. Pierce also makes up a Colombian brisket from time to time, served with new potatoes, rice, and fresh peas. (405) 245-1111.

For picnics and swimming, Tom residents depend on two forest recreation areas. To get to the Kulli Recreation Area from Idabel, go exactly three miles east from the intersection of U.S. 259 and S.H. 3 and turn south on the dirt road. (The corner is known locally as Shults Corner, and a U.S. Forest sign is on the northeast corner of the intersection.) Go south five miles to Kulli Lake. The Bokhoma Recreation Area is closer to town; it's between Haworth and Tom on S.H. 3. Both offer swimming and fishing in small lakes and picnic tables.

The biggest social event in Tom is the Halloween Carnival, when the fire station is transformed into a haunted house. There is music and food, and all proceeds benefit the volunteer fire department.

HORACE POOLAW:

An American Life



LINDA POOLAW

"Horace Poolaw (1906-1984) was given the Kiowa name Py-bo, or 'Big Horse,' " says his daughter, Linda Poolaw, "because everyone could see he would grow to be a big man."

Horace Poolaw was the only American Indian photographer of his generation, the equal of great frontier photographers like Edward Curtis, Charles Lummis, and William Soule. And, until recently, the least known of them all.

His anonymity was his own doing. He agreed to only one exhibition of his photographs in his lifetime, and that was in 1979 in his hometown of Anadarko. By then, his eyes succumbing to diabetes, Poolaw had all but stopped taking photographs. He would die five years later.

Introduced to photography through a correspondence course in the early 1920s, Poolaw apprenticed with landscape and portrait photographers who paused in Anadarko on their way to somewhere else. His father, Kiowa George, had kept the tribal calendar in the old days, so maybe it was natural for the son to document tribal

HORACE POOLAW PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT STANFORD UNIVERSITY





Innumerable photographers have commented on the feeling and movement Poolaw captured in this 1928 photograph of Linda's great-grandmother Kaw-au-in-on-tay being fanned by great-grandson Jerry Poolaw (Linda's brother) on the family front porch. Kaw-au-in-on-tay had been captured at the age of twelve by a Kiowa raiding party in Mexican territory in the years before the Kiowa were confined to the reservation; the Mexican captive never spoke of her past, and went on to join other Kiowas in the Ghost Dance movement, which preached the return of the buffalo and the banishment of the white man.

Horace Poolaw took this photograph of the interment of Mrs. Able Big Bow at Hog Creek, just west of Anadarko, in 1950.

"One thing about my dad's collection is it has so many funerals and so many of these kind of pictures. Cemeteries were one of Dad's big things," says Linda. "I don't know how many pictures of Rainy Mountain Cemetery we have. I've always wondered, 'Why cemeteries? They're going to be there a long time.' But anyway, we got them."

HORACE POOLAW PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT, STANFORD UNIVERSITY





HORACE POOLAW PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT, STANFORD UNIVERSITY



This 1955 photograph shows Lizzie Little Joe holding a baby while the parents ready a float for the Expo parade.

life with a camera. And document it he did. "(Photos) ranged from tornado damage to people in caskets to every event that happened from 1923 to 1978," says his daughter, Linda Poolaw, "as long as it happened in or near Kiowa people."

Taken in toto, the photographs chronicle more than half a century of Kiowa life, during what was arguably one of the most transitory periods of the tribe's history. "His dad rode the plains on horseback and fought the cavalry and other Indian people," marvels Linda Poolaw, "and in a few years that had been reduced to nothing but going to church on Sunday mornings...Kiowas had gone from horseback to Model T's, from tipis to frame houses."

Given the novelty of their content, how did such photographs stay secret for so long? The answer lies, again, with Poolaw himself. "My brothers and I all agree that when he was alive none of us appreciated that he was so darned good. We didn't know that, and I don't think he knew it, or he would have said 'Yes' to the invitations for shows and books."

Instead, Horace Poolaw waved off such requests. "He used to say, 'If people don't leave me alone, I'm going to burn these damn things,'" recalls Linda Poolaw. "We all backed off."

In the end, the world learned of Poolaw only because he had once turned some of his

photographs of Kiowa life into postcards that his children sold for pennies at the Anadarko bus station. "That's how (the photos) escaped and got into books," says Linda Poolaw. "You can pick up just about any book on the Kiowa and one of his photographs is there, but very rarely is his name."

Still photographers tracked him down. From New York and California, admirers made the pilgrimage to the Poolaw home just west of Anadarko, where Horace Poolaw kept some two thousand negatives in sacks and boxes under his bed. There was little finished work to show. Poolaw rarely identified his photographs and printed even fewer (paper was too expensive and printing was inconvenient—his darkroom was so leaky he had to print at night). It would take his daughter and Stanford University, which in the process of preserving the negatives also produced an exhibition, to win his work the audience it deserved.

Would Poolaw be impressed that his work has been shown at the Smithsonian and Stanford University? Not likely. "(Dad) always said that he did not want to be remembered himself," says Linda. "He wanted his people to remember themselves through his pictures."

—Jeanne M. Devlin



HORACE POOLAW PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT, STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Horace Poolaw documented his family over the course of half a century (1928 to 1978); in the process, he told the story of a tribe's transition. From left, back row, Billy Tichywy, Newton Poolaw, and Erwin Ware; front row, Evala Ware, Thelma Poolaw, and Rowena Poolaw at Mountain View in 1928. Linda Poolaw calls this photograph, "Guys and Dolls."

HORACE POOLAW PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT, STANFORD UNIVERSITY





Horace Poolaw had the freedom (and access) to photograph any aspect of Kiowa life or ceremony that he wanted; he also had the wisdom to know when not to. No photograph illustrates that better than this 1930 scene of the morning after a peyote meeting in Mountain View; the men are ready to break their fast and are waiting for the women to bring them beef soup and bread for breakfast. Poolaw could have gone into the tipi and photographed the all-night peyote ceremony, says Linda, but "he had the respect not to do it."



The only year Horace Poolaw didn't shoot the American Indian Exposition parade he was away in the military. Though he captured the essence of the parade on film, as always most of his subjects were relatives and friends. From left, Augustine Campbell, a teen-aged Evalu Ware (she's now a famous Kiowa storyteller), and Juanita Ahtone in the 1941 parade.



Get There

Kiowa Culture in Transition, 1925-1955: The Photographs of Horace Poolaw opens July 17 at the Gilcrease Museum, 1400 Gilcrease Museum Road, Tulsa. (918) 596-2700. Hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday, 1-5 p.m. Sunday and holidays.

The American Indian Exposition, for which Poolaw was the unofficial photographer for decades, is still held each August in Anadarko. It begins officially with a rodeo August 6 and 7 at the Caddo County Fairgrounds, but the big weekend is August 16-21 (tribesmen from around the world descend upon the town for the parade, dances, and art show). Anadarko is located on U.S. 62. For information, call (405) 247-6651.

The OKT Summer Reader

THE WEDDING PICTURE <i>by Robert J. Conley</i>	I
<i>Grandma's Shotgun Wedding.</i>	
THE MULTIFUNCTIONALITY OF QUADRATIC EQUATIONS IN DETERMINING LUNAR ECLIPSES <i>by Robert R. Mercer</i>	II
<i>What's one old book worth? At eight, Stephen Richstadt already knew.</i>	
THE LORD AND T. BONE BOGGS <i>by Gordon Weaver</i>	IV
<i>The Lord giveth, and He doggone sure taketh away.</i>	
MOON FACE <i>by Robert J. Conley</i>	VIII
<i>Nothing is quite what it seems—or is it?</i>	
SPINNING GRANNY <i>by Sheila Bright</i>	X
<i>When Granny finally spoke up, it was a revolution.</i>	
A SONG FOR UNCLE WAYNE <i>by Larry Short</i>	XII
<i>Since my plumb-crazy uncle blew into town, nothing has ever been the same.</i>	



The Wedding Picture

Grandma's Shotgun Wedding

By Robert J. Conley

Robert J. Conley is a poet, novelist, and short-story writer who lives in Tahlequah. A member of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokees, Conley was reared in Oklahoma.

Calf Roper was looking at an old photograph of his grandparents. He was amazed at how young they both looked and at how beautiful his grandmother looked. The picture was printed on heavy paper. Its

edges were a bit ragged, and it was slightly yellowed with age. But Calf Roper thought it was a fine photograph. He looked at his grandfather's face and his clothing and tried to imagine him as a young Indian Territory dandy. He recalled the story his grandmother had told him about the time she had refused to go out with his grandfather while he was courting her, and how he got drunk and rode his horse into town and shot out all the streetlights. Calf Roper remembered her telling that story many times before his grandfather had died. She would tell the story on him and then laugh, and then Grandpa would say, "Now, Mamma, you know that's not true." But Calf Roper knew the story was true.

"Grandma," said Calf Roper, bringing his mind back to the present, "you sure are pretty in this picture."

"What picture are you looking at?" she asked.

She was sitting in the chair across the room from Calf Roper, so he got up to cross the room and show her the picture.

"Oh, that old picture," she said. "That was taken after we got married."

"Oh, really?"

"Yeah," said Grandma. "I was still mad at him, and that's why I was looking like that."

Calf Roper looked at the picture again. She didn't look mad to him at all, just very formal, as folks in old photos always look—formal and beautiful and very young—but

he didn't say anything about that. He thought for a few seconds. "You just got married?" he asked.

"Yes, and then we went over and had this picture made."

"Well, what were you mad about?"

"Oh, he just never did think about anybody except himself. He didn't worry about other people's feelings. I wasn't even planning on seeing him that day. The only reason I was dressed up was because I had a date with another boy that day to go to a dance, but before he came by to pick me up, your grandpa came by the house. He just said, 'Let's go to town and get married.' I told him that I had another date, but he didn't even care about that. He didn't even care that he was making me stand that poor boy up, and that's why I was mad at him when that picture was made, and that's the reason I look that way in that picture."

Calf Roper was still puzzled. "Grandma," he said, and his voice betrayed a slight exasperation, "how come you went and married him if you were mad at him like that? How come you went with him?"

"Well, if I hadn't," she said, "I knew that he'd a just gone on and got drunk and shot up the town again."

(Copyright ©1988 by University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, from *The Witch of Goingsnake*, by Robert J. Conley.)

The Multifunctionality of Quadratic Equations in Determining Lunar Eclipses

*What's one old book worth? At eight, Stephen
Richstadt already knew.*

By Robert R. Mercer

Robert Mercer is a Tulsa writer and photographer.

Stephen Richstadt always took the same route after school. He left John C. Colmar Elementary precisely at 2:55 and headed east on Eighth Street for two blocks, then turned north on Main in the direction of his mother's newspaper, the *High Plains Tribune*. The third-grader was instructed to go directly to his mother's office.

Stephen was always late—or never arrived at all. His mother, noting it was time to close, would breathe a little sigh of good-hu-

mored exasperation. She would say good afternoon to the pressman, who would still be locking up the mirror-image puzzle of zinc cuts and lead type that would become one of Thursday's newspaper pages. Then she would walk south along Main Street, always the proper Presbyterian publisher of a distinguished weekly, wearing her hat and gloves. A block south of the newspaper, she turned to climb the steep granite steps of the Carnegie Library. Sometimes, as she opened the huge brass and oak door, young Stephen would tumble out against her as he pushed mightily against the huge, hinged slab.

Stephen would look up at her, offering always the same excuse, "I forgot the time."

And she would always reply: "There are worse things to forget and worse places in which to forget. Now, let's get home so you can do your homework."

Stephen's mother was a widow. Often he heard her referred to by that title, "The Widow Richstadt," much as other women were called "miss" or "missis." He told her he remembered his father. But he had become aware that the man in his memory looked exactly like the photograph of a man in uniform on the mantle. Yet he couldn't stand to tell his mother he felt nothing about her husband, not when he saw her sit and look at the photo while her index finger traced out the raised letters on the satin pillow that spelled KOREA.

Stephen and his mother always sat down to supper, she at one end of the big dining room table, he on one side. She would tell him about the newspaper, the phone call she received from Mrs. Fronk about the free kittens at the pound. Mrs. Fronk was concerned as to why they called them free when they were in the pound's cages. "Like many, I'm afraid Mrs. Fronk reads the newspaper with only half a mind," his mother said with an almost imperceptible smile.

Stephen also knew that Mrs. Fronk was the woman who raised goats because they reminded her of her late husband, a man with whom she was still very angry. He had heard her lament one day in the drugstore, "He promised I could go first."

His mother would also ask Stephen about his day. "And what did you find so interesting at the library?"

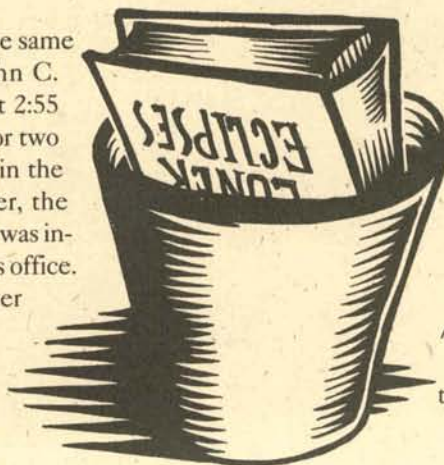
"There's a new book on dinosaurs. The pages fold out, and a real Brontosaurus stands up and fights a Tyrannosaurus Rex. You pull a tab and the Tyrannosaurus Rex bites the Brontosaurus. And they got a new..."

"They have."

"Yeah, they got..."

"Stephen, the word is *have*. They *have*. Now finish your sentence."

"There's a new book on whales, too. And a new Cowboy Sam book."



And another book called *Minn of the Mississippi* 'bout a turtle that..."

"About. Not 'bout. But *a-bout*. You were saying?"

Stephen rolled his eyes. "A-bout a turtle that swims from Minnesota to New Orleans and the...the Car..." He detected her interest in his pronunciation. "The gulf."

"You really love the library. Your father was a reader. You'd expect that of a newspaperman, of course. What is it you like most about the library?"

Stephen did not hesitate: "The smell. The books *smell* like nothing else in the world. They smell better'n a new car." He caught his mother's expression. "Better than a new car. And I love to touch them."

"Why?"

"Because a lot of them have been there so long. Lots of people have touched them. I found a book almost fifty years old yesterday. How many people you think touched that book in that time? Thousands? Millions?"

"High Plains only has a population of 6,500, dear."

"What's a pop-lay-shun?"

"Population, how many people live here."

"Population." Stephen turned the word on his tongue, feeling its shape. "Pop-u-la-tion, population."

"It is possible, but not likely, that thousands touched your book, Stephen, but I can't imagine millions have. We haven't had that many people visit the town, let alone our library."

"Oh. Well, maybe a lot of people touched it a bunch of times, 'cause it looked...(his mother's lips parted) because it looked old."

Stephen was in the library. It was Friday. Tomorrow his mother would drive him, as always, to visit his Grandfather Richstadt on his farm. On Sunday, after church, they would drive to the next town and visit his mother's parents.

One weekend they did not do that. His mother had to interview President Eisenhower, who visited High Plains on his way out to the Panhandle to look at the drought. It was Saturday, but she made Stephen dress just like he was going to church. He liked meeting the president—shook his hand, too—but the whole week seemed wrong because he hadn't seen Grandpa Richstadt.

He didn't really like Friday afternoons. In five minutes the library would close. It meant it would be two days until he could come again. He walked down one row of every shelf. These were his books. He would see them again on Monday. "Bye, books," he whispered.

Mary Jane was at the far end of the last shelf. She would take one book off the shelf, open to where the check-out slip was stuck, read it, flip the book closed, and put it back. Except every once in a while, she wouldn't replace the book, but instead would put it on a cart.

"Whatcha doin', Mary Jane?" Stephen asked the teen-

aged worker.

"Purging books." She flipped another book shut and put it on the cart.

"What's purr—, whatever you said?"

"Purging, purging books. To purge is to get rid of something." Snap. The book went back on the shelf.

"Which books you gettin' rid of?"

"These books on the cart."

"Why, those are good books.

Look at 'em, smell 'em." He grabbed one and opened it and stuck his nose in it. "Nothin' smells like that. Look where they've been touched. How many people you think touched this book?"

"Not many, I'm afraid, Stephen." She gently took the book from him and put it back on the cart. "It hasn't been touched for over ten years."

"How do you know?"

"The check-out slip. Just look at this one, look at this due date: June 5, 1943. This book is just taking up space."

"But it's a book..." Stephen felt hot, and his eyes stung. He was going to cry. He knew it.

"But nobody wants it. If no one wants it and they don't check it out, it's gotta go. That's what Miss Layman says." Mary Jane put another tome on the cart. "Hopefully, I'll be done by tomorrow afternoon."

Stephen turned to hide his tears. His stomach hurt. Monday, they'd be gone. There'd be empty spaces to catch his fingers as he ran them down the rows of stacks. He thought of that wonderful old book—fifty years old—he'd found last week. How many people had touched it? How many more might want to?

Miss Layman looked up at him as he reached the desk. "What red eyes? Little late for hay fever, isn't it?"

"No, ma'am."

"What do you have there?"

"I want to check out this book." He pushed the poorly-bound text across the glass counter top.

"*The Multifunctionality of Quadratic Equations in Determining Lunar Eclipses*," Miss Layman read the title out loud. "Rather a big title for such a small third-grader isn't it, Stephen?"

"Not really, ma'am."

"Do you know what a quadratic equation is?"

"No, ma'am."

"How about a lunar eclipse?"

"No, ma'am," Stephen admitted, then brightening, added, "but I might find out what they are. Anyway, I got it for the pictures."

"Pictures?" Miss Layman thumbed through the text. "Why, I only find one."

WHATCHA READING?

TROY AIKMAN

(Dallas Cowboys' Oklahoma-reared quarterback):

The Firm, by John Grisham. "Mitch McDeere and his wife think they are living the ultimate American dream when he is hired by an extremely prestigious law firm...however, (Mitch) discovers corruption is taking place...and must make a decision on whether to continue (with the firm) or assist the FBI (in uncovering the illegal activities)."

She looked suspiciously at him as she held out the browned text now opened to a single glistening white coated-stock page with a black-and-white photograph of a full eclipse of the moon.

"But isn't it a neat one?" Stephen said with a grin.

Stephen Richstadt flipped open the reporter's notebook. After thirty-five years, Mrs. Taylor would still flunk him for penmanship. Oh well, at least he could read the scrawls that would become a *Washington Post* story. He was cooling his heels in the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum while waiting to interview a shuttle crew member—an astronomer.

He rose as she entered the room. She was maybe five or ten years younger than he was. He caught the accent as soon as she spoke.

"You aren't from western Oklahoma, are you?"

"Why, yes, I am."

"What town?"

"Lots of towns. My daddy roughnecked. He was a tool pusher. We lived all over, some in Texas and New Mexico, too. I went to three high schools."

The conversation got down to business—her very successful experiments on the last shuttle mission. Eventually, Stephen found himself starting to repeat the questions. The interview was over. He flipped the notebook shut.

"Just how did the tool pusher's daughter happen to go into space?" he asked while putting some papers back in his portfolio.

"Dumb luck, really. Girls didn't take math the places where I went to high school—except I did. In Algebra II, we were knee deep in quadratic equations. I could do them, I liked solving them, but I kept asking, 'What do you do with one of these things?' The boys, they laughed at me and my question. The teacher allowed I probably wouldn't need them in any woman's job. Made me mad."

"And then?"

"And then one day I'm in the library. I'm browsing the stacks, and there's an old book. Now that I recall it, a really outdated book, scientifically. A good library would have thrown it out, I swear. But I checked it out. *Quadratic Equations and Lunar Eclipses*, something like that. It hit me, now there was something I could do with them."

Stephen had been getting up from his chair to leave. He was half standing, frozen. "And where was this library?"

She did not answer immediately, but savored the moment. For Stephen's little-kid grin told the young astronomer he already knew the answer.

IN GOD WE



The Lord & T. Bone Boggs

The Lord giveth, and He doggone sure taketh away.

By Gordon Weaver

Gordon Weaver of Stillwater is the author of The Eight Corners of the World and Count a Lonely Cadence, the basis for the Charlie Sheen movie Cadence.

In the Oklahoma Panhandle, in the vicinity of the Texas border, lived a man named T. Bone Boggs. And this T. Bone Boggs did prosper mightily, and was wondrously content, and was full of praise and good works for the Lord. And he did bask in the benevolence of the Lord, who watched over him and did guard him against the misfortunes that may befall a man in life.

This T. Bone Boggs, upon arising each morning, did turn to his wife and say, "Praise the Lord, Jeanmarie, ain't this the life though!" And his wife was wont always to reply that it did appear they had been blessed. And after arising from their king-size round bed, and after performing their daily ablutions in the gleaming double bathroom of the master bedroom, T. Bone Boggs and his wife did, each morning, walk through the patio doors that gave entrance to a redwood deck, where from they might look upon the landscape and know the pleasure of all that had come to them in life. And T. Bone Boggs with his wife did look out upon the world and consider what he saw as his reward for his unstinting labor and the righteousness of his ways in the service of the Lord. "Hoo boy!" he was wont to say to his wife, "Jeanmarie, did you ever once think we'd be eating this high on the hog? Praise the Lord, Hon, and thanks to a little help from old Cletus Dalrymple, wherever he is, and the oil depletion laws and my good sense for business!"

WHATCHA READING?

JANE JAYROE

(Former Miss America & Oklahoma Health Center spokesperson):

Ordering Your Private World, by Gordon MacDonald. "This is a book I reread from time to time to help me prioritize and keep my 'inner' world focused. This is not a highly sophisticated, academic work; it is a practical, well-organized book that offers insights about our 'inner' life, where daily life truly originates."

"I'll confess I never thought you'd become a corporate tycoon, Boone," his wife Jeanmarie was wont to say to him.

Close at hand, they did look upon the ornamental shrubs and the banks of bright flowers blooming in beds cultivated by their full-time Mexican gardener, Patricio Sandoval, already at work, his bare, muscled back gleaming with sweat in the bright sun of morning. And they did look upon the crushed gravel drive that formed a great white arc before the massive Spanish doors of their half-million-dollar split-level home, paid for in cash less than a year before. And they looked upon the broad expanse of their barbered lawn, the rich green of carpet grass dotted here and there with the shapes of live oak, magnolia, cedar, and pine, in the branches of which mockingbirds and cardinals and jays sang in praise of the new day.

And T. Bone Boggs did lift his eyes to look upon the boundaries of his property, marked with a white rail fence, and did lift his eyes yet higher to look into the distance. There he did discern the black shafts of oil rigs alternating with pumpers and storage tanks, and beyond them the misty bulk of Boggs Refinery, Inc. looming like a small mountain on the flatness of the Panhandle, and farther did he look, to the small town of Goshen, Oklahoma, where, above the roofs of the homes of his refinery workers, shone the tower of the Crystal Palace of God's People, a bright needle thrust upward through the drifting refinery haze, a great church built by T. Bone Boggs as witness to his love of the Lord.

"Jeanmarie," he did say to his wife, "do you ever think sometimes how mysterious it is we are so blessed? I mean, where did old Cletus Dalrymple run off to just when I struck it rich? What must he be thinking now if he reads about me in *Time* or *U.S. News & World Report* or *Business Week*, or about me building the Crystal Palace and getting Reverend Dr. Vardis Klemp to be its preacher if he reads in *Christianity Today* or one of them others wrote me up? Oh, Jeanmarie, praise to the Lord and hard work is what it is!" he did say to his wife.

And his wife did say, "Bone, did you ever look at the Mexican Patricio when he's working with his shirt off? Lordy, how them muscles is all shiny rippling in his back from sweating!"

And as he broke his fast each morning with fried eggs and whole-hog sausage and Texas toast and strong black coffee in the breakfast nook of his half-million-dollar house, sitting across from his wife and his daughter Mary Helen, the heart of T. Bone Boggs was yet filled with the rapture of his knowledge of all that had come to him and was his in this life.

And he did consider the facts of his life. He did consider that, though his own mama and daddy were only poor country people from Payne County, Oklahoma, now dead and gone, they had been hard-working, God-fearing folk who suffered and survived the Dust Bowl

on a hard-scrabble farm and had raised him in righteousness and the discipline of hard labor by which to earn his bread. And he did consider his still-lovely wife Jeanmarie, who had placed third runner-up in the Miss Oklahoma pageant of 1961. And he did consider his beautiful little daughter Mary Helen, who sat across from him in her cheerleader's uniform, and who was active in 4-H and Junior Achievement. And T. Bone Boggs thought of his son, T. Bone Jr., away at the University of Oklahoma to study petroleum engineering, and the heart of T. Bone Boggs was gorged on pride and love for the wonderful family that had come to him in his life.

And there was yet more for the thoughts of T. Bone Boggs to dwell upon as he rose from the breakfast nook to begin his day's work. He thought of all he possessed, of his half-million-dollar home with extensive grounds tended by the full-time Mexican gardener Patricio Sandoval, and of the huge garage in which were parked his vehicles, a matched pair of Cadillacs and a Datsun 280-Z and a gentleman's pickup he drove in memory of his humble beginnings. He thought of his Olympic pool and his sauna and of the tennis courts and the stable where his daughter's horses neighed for their oats. He thought of the walk-in closets that held his wardrobe, and of the closets of his wife and daughter and his absent son. And the thoughts of T. Bone Boggs whirled to a blur of all that he owned that he might reach out and touch at any moment he wished.

And there was yet more. In the bank of Goshen, Oklahoma, in a vault were stock certificates and promissory notes and government bonds and letters of credit and certificates of option on mineral rights to likely acreage all over America's Southwest, and deeds to land and rent-houses and apartment buildings and nursing homes and motels and supermarkets. And all of these were his and were managed for him by hosts of shrewd lawyers and accountants. And there was even a leather sack of Krugerrands, purchased more on a whim than as a hedge against unbridled inflation. And there was, of course, much cash in various accounts.

All this he knew, and took great joy of it, and praised the Lord for it, and knew that it was the product of great labor on his part, and perhaps a bit of luck, and did for a moment wonder what had become of Cletus Dalrymple, with whom it all began years ago. And he said to his wife and daughter, "I got to get in to work. The Lord gives us a day and then it's up to us to make the most of it."

And his daughter bade him good day, and so did his wife, and she said further to him, "I got to find that Mexican Patricio and tell him not to work around the house with his body half naked. It don't look right, Mary Helen seeing him that way."

And T. Bone Boggs did set forth in his gentleman's pickup truck in the direction of Goshen, where lay his refinery and his corporate headquarters and the Crystal Palace of God's People, Reverend Dr. Vardis Klemp,

pastor, which church had been built by Boggs to praise the Lord for His benevolence.

And the Lord looked down upon His man T. Bone Boggs there in the Oklahoma Panhandle, and was well pleased with him. And He did say to Satan, "Can I pick 'em or can I pick 'em, Nick? You got to grant Me old Boggs there is going some!"

And Satan said, "Big deal."

"Sour grapes," said the Lord.

And Satan said unto the Lord, "Sure Your boy Boggs does right. And why shouldn't he, what with all You done for him? Didn't You marry him to an ex-beauty queen and give him two picture-book kids? And didn't You send him that angel in the form of an independent oil-field speculator named Cletus Dalrymple who convinced him to drop out of the A&M college at Stillwater and go wildcatting wells out to the Panhandle? Which angel named Cletus Dalrymple then put him onto mineral leases at rock-bottom prices and set his rigs up over the biggest pockets of black gold since Teapot Dome and Anadarko Basin, big as Spindletop practically! And then when he was pumping gushers, then what'd You go and do for him?" Satan did ask of the Lord.

"Okay, so I give him a nudge up to start," the Lord said.

"Nudge!" Satan did cry out. "I'd say nudge! You went and had them Arabs embargo oil is what You done! You created your Boggs an energy crisis is what You done! You decontrolled wellhead prices is all You done for him! You made him an energy tycoon almost overnight is what-all You done!"

"Calm down, Nick," said the Lord. "Okay, so I helped him. But he was a good boy to start with. His old mama and daddy was good country folks from up near to Stillwater, went through My Dust Bowl with nary a whimper, and they raised little T. Bone up righteous. You don't see My system. Folks do good works because they believe in the possible rewards of it. I just giv' T. Bone some of the fruits coming to him and his folks both."

"Fruits?" said Satan unto the Lord. "I'd call them fruits and then some. No wonder he funds half the charities in his part of the Panhandle, giving generously for senior centers and daycare for his refinery people, donated dialysis machines to a mess of hospitals I recollect, sponsors Junior Achievement and 4-H and recreational fast-pitch softball and Good Government Day in Austin and Oklahoma City both, oh, he is a pure-fire monument to faith and works, he is, witnessing at all them chamber of commerce prayer breakfasts, too, don't he!"

And the Lord said, "Your trouble is you don't like giving credit for credit due, Nick. You-all are forgetting that chair he endowed at the University of Oklahoma, and the big pledge he just made for a Free Enterprise Center on the Norman campus, and also how about all those

under-the-table athletic scholarships? Which is not even to speak of that Crystal Palace of God's People there in Goshen. And how are you liking the success of Reverend Dr. Vardis Klemm now he's getting media attention with his big book, *Corporate Capitalism: God's Way*? First one he ever wrote, and it's a big hit! 'Fess up, Nick, you are just plain contrary."

And Satan said, "What I say is, take some of them fruits away from him, see how righteous he stays. You and Your system. It only works when You make it do!"

"Are you daring me, Nick?" asked the Lord.

"I double dare You," Satan said.

"That ties it!" said the Lord, and He was exceeding wroth, and Satan did tremble for fear of the Lord's anger. And then the Lord was calmed, and said unto Satan, "Okay. You go have a crack at T. Bone Boggs there and we'll just see."

"Carte blanche?" asked Satan.

"To a point," answered the Lord. "You can hit him in his bankbook, and you can grieve him through his family, and I don't give a rap for his reputation in Oklahoma or Texas neither one, and you can trouble him some personally, but I don't want to hear about him being no way damaged permanent physically."

"Got You," Satan did say. "I know the ways of it. I will maybe show up Your system for something folks will sour on when they see it go bad on them all of a sudden."

"Your trouble, Nick," said the Lord unto Satan, "is you never think big enough. My system works out of its bigness."

"Just watch me do!" said Satan.

"I plan to," said the Lord.

And the decline in the fortunes of T. Bone Boggs was rapid and complete. The Arab oil embargo was lifted, and American industry, its markets shrinking in a world-wide recession, its ability to borrow venture capital inhibited by high interest rates, did sharply reduce the national demand for energy fuels, and the American motoring public did practice fuel conservation. And it came to pass that there was an international oil glut. And so it was that the corporate finances of T. Bone Boggs were found to be vastly overextended, and the consortium of lenders who had assured his line of credit were loath to continue their support of his endeavors, and did, instead, call upon him and all his agents to meet their debts, refusing, at the last, to refinance both his long and short-term notes, and bankers in Oklahoma and Texas and Illinois and Pennsylvania were ruined in the debacle. And wondrously even, such few new holes as T. Bone Boggs did manage to drill were all found to be dusters.

And there came soon the day of reckoning when all was lost, and his corporation and all its subsidiary companies were declared bankrupt, and what little remained of his life's work was placed in the hands of a federal receivership, and the nation's politicians were called upon to speak soothing words to cushion the shock to

the stock market. And the news of this disaster was reported for all to read in the pages of *Time* and *U.S. News & World Report* and *Business Week*.

And T. Bone Boggs did say to his wife Jeanmarie, "I don't understand the first part of it! Ever'thing was going so right, and now look at the pickle I'm in!"

And his wife did say to him, "You got too big for your britches is what you done. Now it's come to me keeping house in a rented trailer like it was twenty years ago, I suppose? Not this gal, Bone!"

And he lost not only his corporate holdings, but also his personal fortune, to include even the sack of Krugerrands, and his half-million-dollar home was taken for sale at public auction, and he and his wife and his daughter went to live in a trailer court on the outskirts of Goshen, Oklahoma, and the name of T. Bone Boggs had become anathema in the land.

And even more did he lose. His daughter Mary Helen was made pregnant with child out of wedlock by the feckless son of an oilfield roustabout, and did flee to live in sin with the boy in Odessa, Texas. And though he did grieve for this shame, his wife was no comfort to him in his misery, saying, "Maybe you should of give her a taste of your belt once in a while instead of being so busy being a tycoon: she might of turned out better."

Nor did he find comfort in his son and namesake, for T. Bone Jr. was dismissed from the University of Oklahoma for selling cannabis and amphetamine tablets on the Norman campus, and his son did flee to a religious commune in Colorado, and did change his name to New Child of Chemical Light, and did refuse all communication with his parents.

And T. Bone Boggs was utterly disconsolate, and did sit, drinking a bottle of Pearl beer, in the rented trailer that was now his home and his exile. And he did cry out to his wife, "It ain't any justice to it! That boy has disgraced us! Now they ain't even going to name that endowed chair after me there!" And his wife was no comfort, saying their son's depravity was not worse than his father's failure, and further, what did he think Cletus Dalrymple thought of him now if he read the newspapers or watched television? And T. Bone Boggs did cry in his beer, and said, "If it wasn't for you and the hope I get reading Preacher Vardis Klemp's book, I don't believe I could go on!"

And then his wife Jeanmarie did tell him she was leaving him to go with another man, their former gardener Patricio Sandoval, for life with T. Bone Boggs was too depressing. "It ain't no way fair!" he did cry out.

"We're shooting for a new life, me and Patricio. We're going to California where's he's got relatives who own a greenhouse and landscaping business and will give us a start. No hard feelings, Bone, but I just believe you are snake-bit."

And so great was the despair of T. Bone Boggs that he knew not where to turn for succor save to the Rever-

end Dr. Vardis Klemp, pastor of the Crystal Palace of God's People. And he did go to a pay telephone and called this divine, and did speak with the Reverend Dr.'s executive secretary, who did inform him that the Reverend was unavailable, being out on the road on an extended tour of bookstores and radio and television interviews to promote his new book, *Grace: God's Tax Shelter*.

"Lady," he did say to the executive secretary, "This is T. Bone Boggs speaking. I'm the man kicked in the lion's share to erect that glass church of yours. I'm hurting. My businesses is all bust, my wife's run off to California with my gardener, my son's a hippie doper in Colorado last I heard of him, and my little girl's knocked up by a no-account and living in Odessa, Texas, on welfare for all I know. And if that ain't enough, I'm suffering attacks of ulcers and hemorrhoids and my hair's took to falling out in clumps all of a sudden!"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Boggs," she did say to him, "but the Reverend's out of touch. Maybe you could catch him on Carson tomorrow night? He talks as much about spiritual things as he does his new book on them shows."

And T. Bone Boggs, in the throes of despairing rage, did shout over the phone, "Then damn you all and damn it all if I ever give a pure damn for anything ever again and damn me for ever taking the advice of the damn Cletus Dalrymple!"

And Satan did say to the Lord, "How You like them apples?"

And the Lord said, "You pushed him pretty hard, Nick."

"You give me leave to," Satan said.

"It's a disappointment," the Lord did say, "but he was speaking in pain and the heat of the moment there. I might could still salvage something good out of him yet."

And Satan did say, "Oh, don't I know it! I suppose now You'll drop some new windfall on him. I can just see it, You'll send him another angel, maybe in the form of an electronics expert with a patent on a new generation mini-computer, make him rich all over again, won't You?"

"That'll do," the Lord said, and Satan was silent, and waited upon the Lord. And then He did say to Satan, "Nick, your trouble is you take the short view every time. Send down angels? Quick-fix him? Not likely! What it is, is it takes the long haul to know a man's worth or bring it out either one."

"So what do You calculate doing?" Satan asked the Lord.

WHATCHA READING?

GARY ENGLAND

(KWTU's chief meteorologist):

Danger in the Comfort Zone, by Judith Bardwick. "Basically explains the root reason why national, state, and local companies are struggling with profits...that performance standards must be set for everyone in the company, from the leader to the ones they lead. Entitlement is the problem with business today."

"Just you watch Me and see," said the Lord.

And T. Bone Boggs did sleep but fitfully in his rented trailer on the outskirts of Goshen, Oklahoma, crying out, "Why me? Why me!" and "Cletus Dalrymple, where are you when I need you!"

And the Lord spoke to T. Bone Boggs in a dream, saying:

"It ain't for you to question, Boggs. I'll say what's to be. Now hush up and hear Me. First off, you're well shut of that Jeanmarie. Second, your son's confused now, but I aim to send him a revelation soon. Before you know it, he'll be living clean and witnessing for Me, and I may just make him a media evangelist, seeing how tacky that Vardis Klemp turned out. And your little Mary Helen's

going to get religious too. She'll birth a fine son and name him for you, and that boy'll comfort your old age.

"As for you, you just ain't cut out for corporate success nor celebrity neither one. Maybe I should of left you to work your daddy's homestead over to Stillwater all your

days. Messing up like you done, it's hurt the whole idea of rewards for faith and works. So what I reckon for you now is just that: faith and work! You'll have a good restful sleep now, and you'll wake up with that faith back strong forever. And then you'll set to work again because you got it back. You'll sweat like a laborer all your days with a will because you'll believe the rewards are coming your way for it. Oh, you'll make wages, but that's all. The good of it is the example you'll set for all those folks got disillusioned when your businesses collapsed so sudden and your reputation turned all sour. This way, folks making wages like you do will get believing again because they see you sweating and still believing. It will keep My system going.

"Now stop your fussing, Boggs, and sleep on it. This is how it'll be, and there's an end on it!"

And T. Bone Boggs woke refreshed and filled with a great faith in the day and all days to come. And he did live out his days in peace, laboring at such menial tasks as came his way, to include pumping gasoline, cooking short orders, and hiring out in the annual wheat harvests in the Oklahoma Panhandle. And his example was a powerful witness to all about him who dreamed the American Dream of rewards for faith and works. For they said: if T. Bone Boggs, who got rich in the oil business practically overnight and then went broke even faster, can sweat for a dollar and never miss church meetings Sundays or Wednesday evenings either one, who are we to say the system can't work for us?

And the life of T. Bone Boggs was counted a great success, and his old age was comforted by the presence of his only grandson, T. Bone III, and by his joy at the success of his son, T. Bone Jr., who became regionally famous

for his radio preaching.

"The odds, I grant you," T. Bone Boggs did say, to those who came to hear him, "are heavy against it happening twice, but I can tell you I made it fast and fat once, and I do believe in my heart if I stay at the wheel I might could make it again, Lord willing!"

And Satan did say to the Lord, "You got a funny notion of justice."

And the Lord was not moved, and said unto Satan, "It ain't nothing about justice in it, Nick. What it is, is it works for most people as long as they think it does. The main thing is to keep it going, which is what it is with any system. Just look at old Boggs grunting away at it down there if you don't believe Me. And there's an end on it!"

And the Lord looked down upon T. Bone Boggs there in the Panhandle of Oklahoma, and was well pleased with His man.

WHATCHA READING?

CAPTAIN JACK PARKER

(Oklahoma humorist):

Carbine & Lance, The Story of Old Fort Sill, by Colonel W.S. Nye. "It's a prerequisite to southwestern Oklahoma history."



Moon Face

Nothing is quite what it seems—or is it?

By Robert J. Conley

Robert J. Conley is a Cherokee poet, novelist, and short-story writer who lives in Tahlequah.

Hominy Grits did not like the old woman Moon Face. Moon Face had not ever done anything to bother him. As far as he could tell, she was always minding her own business, and she was friendly enough when she passed by his house. She often passed by his house on her way back and forth on whatever business it was that took her away from home. Hominy Grits could not imagine what business an old woman who lived alone and had no relatives could possibly have that would take her out and away from home so much. Every time she passed by his house, the sight of her out on

the road irritated him.

"An old woman like that should stay home," he would tell his wife, Meggie.

"Why do you worry about poor old Moon Face?" Meggie would answer. "She's not doing you any harm by wandering around. She's all alone. She probably doesn't have anything else to do."

"But where is she going all the time?"

"Maybe she's visiting some friends somewhere."

"I don't know anybody around here who is friends with that crazy old woman."

Hominy Grits just didn't like old Moon Face. And Moon Face could tell. She could tell by the look on his face when she passed his house. She would smile and say, "S'yo," and he would grumble and glare. She knew that he did not like her. She wondered why Hominy Grits did not like her. She wondered what he thought about her and what he might say about her when she had passed by his house. Did he talk about her to his family when they were all inside in the evenings? She became obsessed with these questions. She felt like she simply had to find out what Hominy Grits thought of her and how he talked about her.

One evening, not long after Moon Face had passed by Hominy Grits's house, Meggie called her husband and children to come in to supper. Hominy Grits leaned his hoe against the side of the house and started to go in.

"Come on," he said to the children, who were playing in the dirt beside the house. "Let's eat."

As he went in the house, he was followed by four children and five cats. No one bothered to count the cats. If they had, they would have noticed that there was an extra cat in the house—a strange cat. It was a slick, black one, and it stayed close to the other cats—huddled up amongst them. The cats all ran to the shallow pan which Meggie had put their dinner in and placed on the floor. Four of the cats were busy eating and shoving each other to get a better spot at the edge of the pan. The black cat simply crouched in the midst of them. Suddenly the youngest of the children, a boy of about two and a half years, made a dash for Meggie, and his path led him straight through the crowd of cats. The four who were on familiar ground knew enough to give him room, but the black cat was caught by surprise. The little one tromped hard on its tail, and the black cat made a screech that caused Meggie to drop a dish and Hominy Grits to almost fall backward in his chair, which he had tilted back on two legs.

Before anyone had time to say anything about the cat's screech, the cat, furious with pain, clawed the bare leg of the toddler and made his blood run. The poor little boy began to scream in pain and fright. Hominy Grits leapt from his chair and raced for the cat. The black cat was so intent on its revenge that it did not see Hominy Grits coming after it. The cat had latched itself onto the little boy's leg with the claws of all four feet. All the

children were screaming. The mother was raving. The cat was hissing and snarling.

Hominy Grits grabbed the black cat by the nape of its neck, and when the cat felt its neck and back skin wadded up in his grip, it writhed and twisted to get its claws into the flesh of this new enemy. Hominy Grits, the cat clawing at his wrist, went to the door and opened it. Then, with all his strength, he flung the black cat at a tree that stood out in front of his house. As soon as he had turned loose of the cat, Hominy Grits turned to a bucket of coals that stood beside the wood stove upon which Meggie had cooked supper. As the cat yowled outside, Hominy Grits grabbed the bucket of glowing coals, ran back to the door, and flung the contents of the bucket at the cat. Many of the coals found their mark, and the yowls and screeches became even more terrible as the black cat disappeared down the road that ran in front of the house.

The next day, just after the family had finished lunch, Hominy Grits announced that they were all going for a walk.

"Where are we going?" asked one of the children.

"Oh," said Hominy Grits, "I think we'll take this leftover food to that old woman who lives down the road."

"What are you up to now?" asked his wife.

"Come on," he said. "Let's go."

When they got to the house of Moon Face, they stopped and stood in the middle of the road. Hominy Grits stared at the house, not feeling as brave as he had before.

"Well," said Meggie, "what now?"

Hominy Grits drew himself up and walked to the door.

"Moon Face, old woman," he shouted, "are you in there?"

"Who is it?" came a voice from inside.

Hominy Grits's courage returned to him, and he opened the door and stepped inside.

"We brought you some food, old woman," he said.

The old woman was lying in her bed with a quilt covering most of her body, but Hominy Grits could see that her arms, which were lying on top of the quilt, were bandaged. Her hair was frizzled as if it had been singed, and one bad burn was visible on her face.

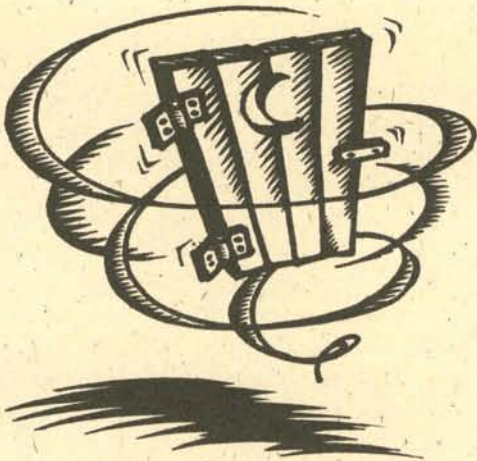
"Why, what has happened to you?" asked Hominy Grits.

"Oh, I fell into my fire yesterday," answered the old woman. "It will be all right soon."

Hominy Grits left the food they had brought and went back outside to join his family. After they had walked down the road for a little while, he stopped and turned around, facing back toward the old woman's house. Then he looked at his wife.

"So now we know," he said.

(Copyright ©1988 by University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, from *The Witch of Goingsnake*, by Robert J. Conley.)



Spinning Granny

When Granny finally spoke up, it was a revolution.

By Sheilah Bright

Sheilah Bright is a writer who lives in Sand Springs.

Spinning Granny wasn't the most exciting part of that summer, but until the tornado, it was all we could think about. My skinny cousin Eldon claimed to have conceived of the idea, but I had the guts to try it first. Eldon said this came from him being a country kid all the time and me being one only during summer vacation. Whatever the reason, it passed the time of day between picking stuff out of the garden and eating it, which seemed about all country folks did.

I knew Granny must be an important person because she had her own bed. Eldon said that was because she stunk, but I didn't believe him. You kinda had to watch Eldon! He stretched the truth sometimes just to get a laugh. I guess that was because he was a country kid all the time.

The way I figured, Granny couldn't sleep with Grandpa and Grandma because, well, sleeping with your own son at her age just wouldn't have been proper. Anyway, I wasn't sure if my grandma really liked Granny or if she just put up with her because she came with Grandpa.

Grandma told me when she married Grandpa, he'd brought two things with him: a hoe and his mother. I knew what the hoe was for, what with a garden being such an important part of their lives, but I never was sure about Granny. As far back as I remembered, she'd been a cranky old woman with a long neck and a small head. She looked like a chicken in the daylight, but her neck seemed to stretch between lunch and supper so by the time we turned out the lights for bed, she looked more like a turkey. Her shadow made my skin crawl. Grandpa said his mom used to be a real looker. Eldon said people

looked because they weren't used to seeing a chicken woman. She always looked the same to me.

Most of the time, spinning Granpy wasn't so much of a scheduled thing as a natural thing, like slamming the screen door or jumping on the feather bed. We would catch her on our way out the door. But I must admit, spinning Granny was habit-forming.

She always sat in her favorite swivel chair, her Naugahyde throne. No matter what time of day, if you ever sat in it, she'd bump you out with a self-righteous authority I thought you must get after you passed eighty years of age. Granny didn't sit as much as nod. More like snore. She looked lost in a deep sleep, but I knew she could open those bird eyes any minute and brand you a sinner.

We didn't let the eyes stop us. Eldon would wink three times, and I knew what to do. We had a secret language, Eldon and me. Like twins, except he was tall and skinny, and I was a girl. On the last wink, we'd stroll into the kitchen. Eldon liked to watch more than spin, so I always went first.

"Go!" Eldon would say, and I'd run through the living room, fling out my left arm, and give Granny's rocker a giant swivel.

We'd be out of the house before the first full rotation, but not before Grandma yelled from the kitchen, "You kids stop spinning Granny!"

Like burglars, we'd creep to the window and watch her whirl round and round. Sometimes, she wouldn't wake up at all. Most of the time, she'd jerk her head and look straight in our direction with this look in her eyes that I figured could do more damage to a wall than the mice that gnawed there at night.

She never said anything about it. Never a "Why do you kids spin me?" or "I'm an elder and spinning isn't respectful." Nope, she never mentioned a single word about it. Granny could have moved across the room to the Naugahyde sofa, but she opted to plop down in the rocker day after day.

Eldon figured she liked it, and he tried to get me to try something different, like fill her snuff jar with manure, but I wouldn't do it. I told him the spinning made the summer go by faster.

That, of course, was before the tornado.

Everything the day of the tornado happened kinda fast. One minute I stood by the empty brown Naugahyde and wondered how I'd missed Granny. The next minute, I was pinned under a feather mattress in the hall. Eldon said we was going to suffocate under the mattress, but all I could think about was my face stuck against the dark spot that smelled like somebody else's pee. Grandpa stretched across the top to the mattress to hold it down, and Grandma pulled our faces against her big bazookas and prayed.

"Where's Granny?" Eldon mumbled into Grandma's left breast.

"She's in the privy, and I pray to God she hangs on," Grandma said.

Granny in the privy? I thought about how funny she'd look perched on the wooden two-holer and how awful it'd be if the tornado blew her in. I'd looked down privy holes ever since Grandpa told me about a man dying in one. A water moccasin bit him right on the backside when he was careless enough to sit down without looking. After seeing what was down there, I didn't want to have anything to do with pulling anyone out of a privy hole. Just thinking about Granny's bird eyes peering up out of that dark hole gave me the shakes.

Granny had always said she wanted an indoor privy before she died, but Grandpa said the plumbing alone cost more than the house did. He built a wooden floor in the outhouse instead. I wondered if Granny appreciated the privy now that it was the only thing standing between her and the tornado.

In the house, dishes crashed in the kitchen, and it sounded like a tractor fired up in the living room. Grandma shouted, "My Lord," and Grandpa cried out, "Hang on, Ma!"

Something bounced on the mattress, and Grandpa yelled, "Good God a'mighty." And then everything quieted down and I heard everyone breathe. Grandpa yanked the mattress off us and ran toward the back porch. Eldon made it to the porch quicker than me because I stopped to look at what used to be the living room. I blinked twice to make sure I was seeing things right. Half the roof was gone. Two walls were gone. The brown Naugahyde rocker was gone.

Grandpa yelled, and I ran to the porch. The privy lay on its back in the pea patch. Grandma wrung her hands and said, "Good God a'mighty" twice. Grandpa ran across the backyard, jumped over a droopy clothesline, and made it to the garden before I could get off the porch.

Grandpa grabbed the privy door and pulled it open slow and easy. I held my breath, because Grandpa looked more scared than I'd ever seen him. He stuck his head back out and yelled, "She's a trooper!"

Grandma said, "Praise the Lord!"

Grandpa lifted his mother out of that privy like she was a baby. Everyone ran to the pea patch, and Grandma hugged Granny and said, "Thank heaven for privies."

Grandpa wiped his eyes with the back of his hand and said, "Ma, I don't know how in the cat hair you made it through that tornado."

Eldon and me couldn't believe it either. Granny's hair was still in a bun. The top button of her dress was still buttoned. Except for one garter balled up around her ankle, Granny looked as much like a chicken as she always had. Still, I couldn't help but admire her a little. Anyone who'd survived in a privy thrown halfway across the yard by a tornado, well, I figured God must have a reason for keepin' 'em around.

MIND OVER MATTER

My old grandmother, Tekapay' cha,
stuck an ax into a stump
and diverted a tornado.
In minutes we would have been destroyed.
It took the little town of Porter
ripping up the railroad tracks,
twisted the rails and stood them up.
There was power in that twister.
There was power in my grandmother.
Those who doubt, let them doubt.

—Louis Littlecoon Oliver

AUTUMN

Autumn is a summer's death
Only in its leaves;
For trunk and branch
Fall is repose;
It is no tree
That grieves.

—Howard F. Stein, 1992

A PLACE CALLED DESOLATE

They call it desolate
When wind-chased tumbleweed
Lumber, roll, fly
Over flat grasslands,
Wheat fields, paved highways,
And dirt roads;
When a clump of half-dead
Cottonwood clings to a
Stream bed that fills at flood,
But mostly flows
Red clay mud.
I have made home
Driving roads lined dense
With winter straw.
Desolate is not
The place I saw.

—HFS, 1991

CONSOLATION

Sometimes, a prairie's thick-fallen darkness
Will smite even the angel of death.
What consolation, then, do I seek
From a black prairie sky?
None, but to outlast
The cloud that sends the hail
That pelts the wheat
That makes us bread.
It is the waiting
I most dread.

—HFS, 1992

For the first time, I think I saw Granny as a real person. She might look like a chicken until the day she died, but that didn't mean we had to talk about it. And after eighty years, well, after eighty years maybe I'd be cranky too.

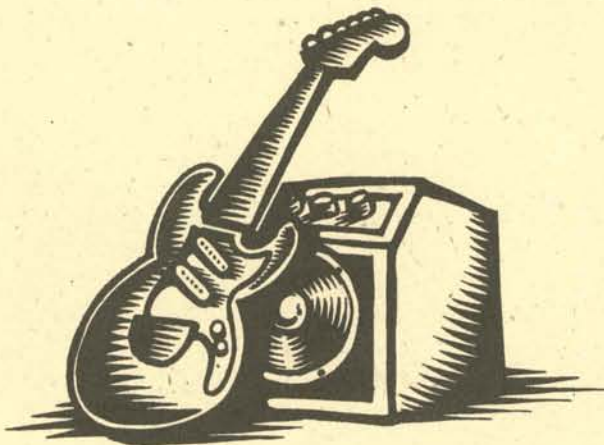
We watched Granny shake her finger toward the cabbage row. Everyone turned their heads. The brown Naugahyde rocker sat perfectly still between the cabbage and the turnips. Grandpa helped Granny toward her chair, and everyone stepped over bent and broken plants. It seemed funny to me that we tiptoed through the garden when half the house littered the yard.

Eldon grabbed a tomato and bit a chunk out of it. Juice ran down his skinny chin, and I thought it was a real rude thing to do. Grandpa eased Granny into her chair and waited for her to say something. No one had heard Granny say a thing since she crawled out of the privy. I was beginning to think maybe the tornado twisted her tongue around like it had the clothesline pole.

Finally, Grandpa squatted and grabbed one of Granny's wrinkled, little hands. "Ma, do you remember what happened?"

She closed her eyes and puckered up her lips.

"Tell them kids," she said, "to quit spinning me."



A Song for Uncle Wayne

*Since my plumb-crazy uncle blew into town,
nothing has ever been the same.*

By Larry Short

Larry Short is writer who lives in Broken Arrow.

I remember the day Uncle Wayne came to stay with us. We were living on a small ranch in Piedmont, Oklahoma, and Uncle Wayne came blowing into our lives like a dust storm or an ill wind (depending on

whether the person talking was me or my Dad). Wayne pulled into our yard unannounced (and uninvited) in his ancient Chevy II, and Changuito, our black Lab, wouldn't let him out of the car.

Papa called off Changuito (Geet for short) and the other dogs and asked Uncle Wayne to come into the house. Papa didn't blink an eye when Wayne produced the biggest suitcase I'd ever seen in my eight years; but he was visibly shaken as he shouldered a fancy guitar case and handed Ma a huge black powder pistol to carry into the house.

"Stayin' a while, are ya?" Papa asked.

"Never know," grinned the mysterious stranger.

It just happened to be supper time when my uncle showed up (no coincidence, Papa said later), so we washed up and sat at the table, all three of us kids staring at our guest like we'd never had one before. Wayne was about six feet tall and built stocky. With his shoulder-length, reddish brown hair and bushy mustache, he looked like a TV wrestler with a beer belly. In fact, his countenance bordered on fierce, though his kind green eyes kept him from scaring anyone. He had trouble handling small objects—coins, buttons, and soup spoons like the one he was struggling with the first time we ate together—because his hands were so wide and meaty, with stubby fingers.

Even with this handicap, I recall him doing some damage to that big bowl of black-eyed peas. Mama said he ate so much because he worked so hard in the steel mill way up north, where I figured he turned red hot steel into crankshafts for Ford tractors like the one we had.

After supper, Papa and Uncle Wayne smoked some stinky cigars and drank beer. And Mama shooed us off to bed so we couldn't hear what Papa and Wayne were saying; she might as well have saved herself the trouble, because we heard everything. They started with polite questions about everyone's health and how things were going, but before long it became "remember the time," and Papa and Uncle Wayne were laughing and pounding the table with their fists.

"You remember the time we painted the old dog red?"

"Yeah, I remember, the whole dog was red but for a spot under his tail, but I fixed that!"

"Dad sure was mad. The only thing that saved our hides was the fact it was water-based paint."

"Shucks, Irish Setters are 'sposed to be red, ain't they?"

More table pounding.

"Juanita, how 'bout a couple more beers?" Papa said.

"I'll get 'em," Wayne said.

"Sit down, that's what I got a wife for," Papa said.

Uncle Wayne didn't feel comfortable when my dad bossed my mom around. They were two men alike in a lot of ways, but completely different in others.

They laughed some more and drank some more, and

the talk turned more serious. I heard Papa say something about Vietnam, and it grew quieter in the kitchen for a little while. Both men said something I couldn't hear; then they raised their beer bottles together and said, "Don't mean nothin'."

Before long, Papa challenged Uncle Wayne to an arm wrestling contest, although, Wayne obviously didn't want to. Papa teased him, saying he'd been living up north so long he'd turned into a Yankee sissy. That was enough for Uncle Wayne, and soon the men were rolling on the floor, punching and wrestling like a couple of kids. Wayne was on top, pouring a bottle of beer on my dad's face. Both men were red-faced and laughing. Mama came running in and told them to take it outside. Wayne helped Papa to his feet and turned to apologize to mom. Papa brushed himself off, complained that she always broke up fights when he nearly had Uncle Wayne where he wanted him.

My parents said good night and told Wayne to make himself at home. They said they would see him in the morning, but we didn't. He was up and gone to Oklahoma City before we were out of bed. We didn't see him until late that afternoon. Papa said he was probably in town, "Raising Cain."

When Wayne showed up (just before supper time), he was carrying two sets of uniforms for his two new jobs.

"Start Monday," he said.

"What in the world do you need two jobs for?" my dad asked.

"Child support."

Mama said after the war, Papa came home to Oklahoma, but Uncle Wayne had itchy feet and traveled all over the country, down to Mexico, up to Alaska. He ended up in the coal country of Pennsylvania, where he married a woman, Mama said, was mean as a snake. After working ten years in the steel mill, he was laid off, just about the time the oil patch dried up here at home. His wife divorced him almost immediately and wouldn't let him see his son anymore. That's when he went a little crazy and started drinking more and became sad. He had drifted around, like before, until he showed up at our place.

Papa observed if you can't make it on one job you might as well quit. Uncle Wayne said it took two Reagan jobs to equal the one Jimmy Carter job he had lost. Pretty soon the men were arguing about unions and scabs and Democrats and Republicans, and it looked like they'd exhaust a whole host of subjects until Mama called us to supper.

After supper, we gathered around the pool table. And playing was fun at first, but after a while, Dad wanted to play Uncle Wayne for money, and Wayne said he couldn't afford to waste money on a silly game. Papa said he was being yellow again and put fifty dollars on the pool table.

"Quit being goofy," Mama said, but Papa was too

SPRING IS OVER

No radio needs to say:

"Spring is over,"

"Late afternoon
Scattered thunderstorms."

The wheat is in;
Giddy children
At the back of pickup trucks
Sprinkle gasoline
On the white stubble,
Fling lit matches,
Leave orange flame
And blue smoke
Close behind
Dad's deliberate pedal.

Morning lows
Produce streams of sweat
Before sun or coffee.

Roadside weeds,
Dark, opulent green,
Tall enough to hide
Pasture fence,
Shrivel in place.
Beige is crowned king;
Neither cloud nor prairie
Stand in the way
Of a burning sun.

No need now to say:

"Slight chance of showers."

The only sure water here
Is salty; it rises
Up to boil
On the surface
Of the skin.

—Howard F. Stein, 1992

SUMMER STORM, SOUTH PLAINS

Serpent-tongued,
A lavender-black
Southern sky
Slithers north
Through grassland,
Wheatfield,
Industrial park
And downtown.
Spewing or devouring:
No one knows who
Or what or when.
Summer prairie storms
—Are reptilian
In their slow advance
And in their strike.

—HFS, 1992

WHATCHA READING?

RHONDA WALTERS

(First Lady of Oklahoma):
Women Who Run With Wolves, by Clarissa Estes.
 "This was recommended by the National Governor's Association, and it was on their reading list for governor's wives to read."

of us have to work in the morning." My father repaired appliances for a living, so he had to work on Saturdays.

Later that night, I heard music coming from the kitchen. When I went to look, Uncle Wayne was sitting in the dark, facing the dishwasher. He had teased my parents earlier about living in such an old house with every appliance known to man. Now he was using the machine to give him a tempo to play his guitar to. He coaxed a soft, rhythmic sort of blues out of the instrument, and as he strummed, he murmured some words. He sang very poorly, but he seemed to pour his soul into the song. He had tears in his eyes as he worked those stubby, almost deformed fingers over the frets. It was the most touching sight I'd ever seen, and I wanted to see and hear more.

He must have heard me stirring, however, because he wiped his eyes and removed all the pathos from the tune he was playing. The song became a raucous, bawdy vaudevillian number, suitable for a dance hall of old.

"Hi, son. Did my howlin' at the moon wake you up?"

I came around to face him, trying not to stare but unable to keep my eyes off the guitar. It was an old Stratocaster, black and shiny as the night. Its neck

was worn from years of howlin', and even without the amplifier, it sounded like an angel's harp to me. Wayne saw my eyes and asked a silly question: would I like to hold it?

I cradled that instrument more carefully than a newborn babe. My fingers touched the strings, and I held back the urge to strike them wildly with the pick Wayne had handed me.

"Will you teach me how to play it?" I begged.

"You'll have to wait 'til someone shows me," he said quite matter-of-factly. "I've been pickin' at this thing for fifteen years and haven't learned yet." He let me strum a while and showed me a couple of chords. Then he said it was time I was off to bed. He poured me a drink of water and tucked me in. Somewhere inside I began to doubt that he was as crazy as my Dad had always said.

I woke the next morning to the smell of bacon and eggs cooking. Wayne had gone into Piedmont to Don's General Store and brought home some groceries and big filled donuts. He was happily cooking breakfast when

proud to back down. Wayne just shook his head, ran the table, and pocketed Papa's cash.

"If you don't mind, I'll go out and get some air," Wayne said. Papa looked a little sheepish.

"Guess I'll go to bed: some

my Dad came in and began complaining about him spoiling us.

"What you mean? It's your money I'm spendin'."

"I guess ole Reagan ain't so bad after all."

It sounded like they weren't mad at each other anymore, but it was a short-lived truce.

"You did what?" Papa yelled. "Are you nuts?" Papa had only been home from work a few minutes before he and Wayne were at it again. He was angry because Uncle Wayne had walked with us about a half a mile to the crater, a deep valley left in the ground by an oil exploration. He had brought his relic of a pistol along, and we had used the steep walls of the manmade valley as a backdrop for target practice. Using a Coke can as a target, we held a tournament, and my older brother Rene was declared the champion. Wayne had used the time to give us instruction in gun safety. He also turned our adventure into a history lesson, telling us about the Indians who had hunted buffalo on these very lands without the benefit of powder and shot, and how the Indians let no part of the beasts go to waste. He spoke of the Spanish explorers who crossed this prairie looking for a city of gold. Cowboys, farmers, railroaders, oilmen all came to life between the deafening booms of the gun. Somehow, the act of pouring gunpowder and loading the lead balls into the weapon made his tales lucid and real. And now here he was apologizing to our dad for being so thoughtless.

Wayne excused himself after supper that night and went outside. It was dark, and I couldn't contain my desire any longer to hold that guitar again. I went looking for him and found him laying on the hood of his Chevy. His arms were folded behind his head, and he was looking dreamily at the starry sky.

"Aren't you gonna play music tonight?"

"Why would I want to interrupt the music already being played?"

I remember thinking maybe he really was crazy; there was certainly no music to be heard. He told me I had to be quiet, that this was the only part of the country to hear this music. He told me to close my eyes and listen.

Unconvinced, I nonetheless shut my mouth, and as I grew quiet, I heard what he spoke of. First it was the wind, moaning all around us in a dozen voices, its hot summer breath rippling through the wheat. Then each oil well began repeating its creaky call, sounding for all the world like mechanized frogs seeking a mate. The neighbors dogs joined in the chorus, and Wayne nudged me and pointed skyward. Amid the millions of stars I had never noticed before, there flashed a shooting star, then another.

"Make a wish," Wayne said.

"Ah, I don't believe in that stuff," I said.

"Make one anyway: what have you got to lose?" he asked with a grin.

I made a wish that night all right, I wished that Uncle

WHATCHA READING?

BOBBY MURCER

(89ers' consultant):
Elias Baseball Analyst, by Seymour Siwoff. "Since I'll be broadcasting for the Yankees again this summer, this will be the book I'll be reading."

Wayne would stay with us forever.

After that weekend, we rarely saw our uncle except for very early in the morning before school or late at night if we woke up for a drink of water. I would occasionally hear him playing his guitar and howlin', and I came to realize the reason he seemed so sad when he played his instrument was because he had a musical gift burning inside of him. His heart and brain made music out of almost anything. He was music. It broke his heart to be busting with all that talent and not be able to express it properly because of the cruel joke nature had played on him with those clumsy fingers. He did an enviable job even with his stubs, but when he missed a sound he desired because his stubby fingers couldn't make the stretch, he became bitterly frustrated.

Time with Uncle Wayne was catch as catch can, but he managed to teach me a few basic principles of music: keeping time, notes and chords, and a few other things. He refused to teach me any songs. He said if there were any songs in me, they would come out on their own. He let me practice on his Strat while he was at work, which was nearly all the time.

Summer passed quickly, and the music we heard next was school bells. As the weather cooled off, my dad had fewer customers who needed their air conditioning fixed. He spent more time around the house and worried a lot about the bills. Mom had to get a job at the restaurant in Piedmont (there was only one), and our time together as a family dwindled as we all kept different schedules.

One rare occasion, we were having a cookout in the backyard, and everyone but Wayne was there. The dogs were barking, trying to beg some of Papa's barbecue, and someone wished aloud that Uncle Wayne was there. Dad said that someone should be glad to have a nice, relaxed meal without having to listen to Wayne's nonsense.

We chewed on that thought as we worked on the ribs and brisket. It was a beautiful autumn day without a cloud in the sky. The wind was calm, for once, and I became aware of the sound of a small airplane passing overhead. The plane began making a noise as if it was running out of gas, and everyone was now looking up. The engine quit altogether, and the plane started a downward spiral directly over the ranch house. It spun like a top, and we scattered like rabbits. At about one hundred feet, the airplane recovered from the spin and sailed silently over our rooftop. A window opened, and the pilot yelled, "I say, which way to Yukon?"

"That crazy *\$%\$!!," Papa hollered as we realized for the first time it was Uncle Wayne in the airplane. He did a neat power dive that rattled the windows and sent the dogs scurrying for cover. My Dad was furious. He said he was gonna kill Wayne when he got home. I guess some of the neighbors were a little miffed, too, because Uncle Wayne had buzzed their pastures and shown a few

TO AN AUTUMN SCRUB OAK

"How can you be
Already winter-bare?"
I say as the scrub oak
Juts its gnarls
Into prairie night.
"It is but October."

"But this is Oklahoma,"
My tree rebukes,
"And October may be
Like January,
Though it is more often
Like August."

Though we deep plowed
And planted
This steppe land,
We do not tame it.
We bend, like winter wheat
And weed and scrub oak,
To its surprises.

Cassiopeia is rare
Through the branches
In October—
But not impossible.

—Howard F. Stein, 1992

NARROWED VISTA

I have narrowed my vista
From the high mountain;
I stand on the low plains now,
Keep watch by a single tree.

A scrub oak claws its stubborn way
Into prairie clay and prairie sky.
Season upon season, it stays
As if it had greater claim
Than empires.

I maintain my watch.
I have seen the end of the world
From a mountaintop;
In a scrub oak
I have found its tenacity again.

—HFS, 1993

PRAIRIE SKY

A prairie sky
Does not always grin from ear to ear
Or stand tall at dark blue attention.
Sometimes it descends so far down
And drenches for so long
That it ceases for a while
To be sky at all.

—HFS, 1993

WHATCHA READING?

HENRY BELLMON

(Former governor & U.S. senator):
Truman, by David McCullough. "(It is) about Truman's life and service as president."

the war. Something about flying upside down under a bridge in Pittsburgh.

Mama, always the peacemaker, said Wayne was tired from working two jobs and just needed to let off some steam. Papa said he was nuttier than a fruitcake and would have to leave soon, before he gave us kids notions.

We didn't see Wayne after the plane incident for a while. He just came home to change his Jetaway Aircraft uniform to a 7/11 store clerk uniform, or to sleep. The next time I saw him, I was sporting a black eye.

"Who gave you that shiner?" he hooted. "It's a beaut."

I told him I'd gotten into a fight at school because kids made fun of my mother because she is Spanish. They didn't want to go to school with any dirt poor Mexicans.

The next day, there were brand new clothes for all three of us kids waiting for us when we got up for school. Wayne said to put them on but to take our time; we were going to be a little late today. He had a funny black outfit like a chauffeur's uniform. Outside sat a brand new Lincoln Continental.

As he drove us to school, Wayne made sure to drive past the corners in town where the kids hung out. He made us promise to never be ashamed of our heritage. He said that God made so many different kinds of people because He loves diversity in all things. He also

made us promise to never judge folks by their appearance, because we would spend our lives being fooled.

Wayne made sure every kid at school saw us in that big, shiny car. He opened the door for us with a flourish and bowed low like we were royalty. He said something like see you next trip,

but we were too excited to hear. Our public awaited us; we were stars for the day.

When we returned home from school, the Lincoln was gone. Dad was home and seemed upset. I guess he and Uncle Wayne had had another argument. Papa had yelled at him for renting the fancy car and filling his kids' heads with pipe dreams. Wayne had gone into town, quit both jobs, and collected his pay. Then he did a little shopping. He bought all three of us kids a new winter coat and a pair of gloves. He left a note for each of us, saying what a fun summer he had had with us. I went stomping into my room, angry that he didn't stay long enough to say goodbye. On my bed was Uncle Wayne's

limousins who was boss. Personally, I was amazed to learn that a person didn't need normal fingers to fly an airplane. Papa said that Wayne could fly like a bird but had lost his pilot's license years ago for some gawdawful stunt he had pulled right after

guitar and small amplifier. A note told me the guitar was all mine now, to take care of it. It also said that he knew I'd be playing songs in no time.

Mama said that Uncle Wayne was heading to a place called Jackson Hole, where you could howl at the moon in peace. Papa said that we might never hear from that nut again, but I hoped he was wrong.

All the above happened in Oklahoma in the summer of 1982. Times got worse and worse for us in Piedmont, so we had to move to Arizona, where there were year-round opportunities for an air-conditioning repairman. Arizona is beautiful, and I've learned to love it, but I've always dreamt of returning home to the land of moaning wind and creaking oil wells.

The guitar? Dad took it down and pawned it one day while I was at school. I was heartbroken, of course, but knew we needed the money for silly things like food and rent. I'd had the guitar long enough, however, to get a feel for music. I started playing fiddle in a Tucson mariachi band known as Los Changuitos Feos, or the Ugly Monkeys. Thanks to a program started many years ago in Tucson, I was able to play four years in the band in exchange for a college education. So, thanks to my Uncle's howlin'-at-the-moon tendencies, I got a nice head start in life.

My most memorable band trip was to the Latino Festival held in Tulsa in 1991 at the Williams Center. There was the usual excitement of staying at a very nice hotel with my young friends, but this trip was special because Uncle Wayne was going to be there. He and my dad had mended fences, and now they called each other a few times a year. I guess the mountain-man phase of Wayne's life in Wyoming lasted until he got homesick again and came back to live in Tulsa. He had remarried (an Okie gal this time) and had a daughter, and they were coming to our show.

That evening as we went on stage, I was disappointed because Wayne hadn't shown. Our manager had okayed us playing a song that featured me as soloist, and I wanted my uncle to hear it. We went on with the show, of course, and I played and sang my heart out, hoping he was somewhere in the crowd. I needn't have worried. He had shown up an hour early, met my manager, inquired about my progress, and asked if he could help somehow. Wayne had decided to keep his presence unknown so I wouldn't be nervous.

In the middle of my solo I spotted him, sitting under a tree. His little girl was sitting in his lap, clapping her hands to the beat of the song. His eyes were closed, and he nodded his head as if in agreement to the notes and phrases of my fiddle. It was the proudest moment of my life, and I suddenly realized that I knew what Wayne was thinking that moment: all the music trapped inside of him could finally come out, through his guitar, into my fiddle, and back into the Oklahoma wind again, where it came from in the first place.

WHATCHA READING?

YVONNE KAUGER

(Oklahoma Supreme Court justice):
Ravenmocker, by Tulsan Jean Hager (one of three novels on her nightstand). "It's a mystery about the Cherokee Nation."

ine artists living in the boonies— Loving it.

None of the townspeople who congregate at the general store in Coyle have the faintest notion that, less than a half a mile away, Beth Loftin struggles to translate Oklahoma heritage to canvas. “I’m basically an outsider,” says Loftin, **COMFORTABLE** with the fact. “I like solitude.” In Wewoka, sculptor Ron Allen has found a way for his daughter to grow up slow-paced like he did, in a secure, *Peaceful* neighborhood with a vegetable patch out back. “I work around the gardening,” he jokes. And Ashley Wilson, who has filled a barn with his cerebral paintings, decided long ago that he didn’t need to be a big shot in a big city. “I need **SOLITUDE** and about ten years to develop,” he says.



For these artists, the reasons for living out in the boondocks are more compelling than any reason for leaving. “I’ve thought about living in New York,” says Loftin. “I don’t see what a place like that has to offer. This is as **GOOD** a hub as any.”



But there is more to their choices than a certain ease of life. Cattle feeders, watermelon vines, and stock ponds show up in Ashley Wilson’s work as abstractions. Living in the heart of the Seminole Nation no doubt helped to **SHAPE** Ron Allen’s “Indian-like” sculptures. And Beth Loftin, who paints characters she describes as survivors, mines Oklahoma’s history for her art.

“Coming back to the earth,” says Wilson, “gives you a place where you can size things up.



“One day it just dawned on me as I was walking down to the river.” The red soil, the blue sky, and the **WAVING** grasses along the Red River bottom lands all bore down on Wilson. “I thought I should try and get some of that in my art.”

BY BARBARA PALMER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DENNIS J. HOLM

oftin

Prairie Painter

Painter Beth Loftin lives in a rock house on a dirt road north of Coyle with nothing between her breakfast room window and the Cimarron River except a clothesline and rye grass. The smell of leather fills her sunny studio, wafting over from where a saddle is propped up by the easel. Two horses, two dogs, and six cats (including what might be the world's friendliest Siamese), graze in the pasture, wander in the yard, or nap on the kitchen table. As a visitor can soon see, Beth Loftin is no tortured artist. Contentment surrounds her like a terry-cloth robe.

Urban life has never held much allure for the thirty-two-year-old artist, who spent her grade-school years living in Pawhuska, where she was born. While her peers were watching "The Brady Bunch," she was out on the prairie. "I used to hang out with the old-timers," she says. "I grew up riding horses and trusting horse legs more than my own. I'm still uncomfortable in a car."

It is no wonder then that Loftin feels a strong kinship with the enigmatic Western characters she paints. Most of them are out of step with time, too: bewildered Native Americans, dandified cowboys, sunburned settlers planting roses on an empty prairie.

Loftin doesn't remember a time when she wasn't fascinated by history, particularly by the history of Indians in Oklahoma. She began to seriously research the subject while she was still a high-school student in Wynnewood. "I was interested not in the mythol-

ogy," she says, "but in the facts."

There has also never been a time that Loftin wasn't determined to be a painter. She started drawing horses when she was three ("which was odd since no one else in my family had ever had anything to do with horses") and sold her first commissioned work when she was sixteen. She studied art at the University of Sciences and Arts at Chickasha, after long hours of discussion around the dinner table. "I had a lot of fights with my dad. He wanted me to be a secretary."

At college, she studied color and design theory and took hours and hours of figure drawing. The formal training was "like adding fuel to a fire," but after two years, Loftin became restless. "I wanted to go on to develop my own style and forge my own path."

"I grew up riding horses and TRUSTING horse legs more than my own. I'm still uncomfortable in a car."

For more than a decade, Loftin supported herself by working in a Stillwater art gallery, painting portraits, and teaching art classes. At night she did her true work, experimenting with color and line and expression. She continued to study Native American history from every possible angle, leafing through albums filled with Kiowa portraits and the diaries of cavalry officers at the Western History Collections at the University of Oklahoma and reading *Black Elk Speaks* and *The Trial of Standing Bear*.

During the last year and a half, the balance has shifted so that Loftin spends most of her time in her studio working on her own paintings. She is easing out of portrait painting and accepting commissions only to tide her over to her next big sale.

These have been coming closer and closer together, thanks in part to the exposure she received during the 1992

exhibit at the Oklahoma City Art Museum's Artsplace entitled *Dudes, Darlin's and Devils: People of the 101 Ranch*, which depicted the nineteenth-century cowboys and performers of Oklahoma's 101 Wild West Ranch Show.

The sixteen paintings Loftin did for the exhibit were just the beginning of what the artist considers to be her life's work: painting human characters who inhabit a slice of time when the world was changing around them. "I am so passionate about these characters," she says. "I want to paint our ancestors in living color, to pay homage to them."

Interestingly, Loftin recently discovered that her own great-grandmother, who was always described as Black Dutch in family stories, was actually Cherokee, a one-

time student at the Cherokee Female Seminary in Tahlequah. Her great-grandfather, a German-born miner, met and married her great-grandmother in Indian Territory. Finding out that part of her family history was like fitting pieces into a puzzle, she says.

Her art, too, has finally coalesced into a congruent theme, one that pulls all of her passion together. "All of my energy is focused into a tight stream.

"Since I was three or four, I've felt like I was working up to something.

"Now I want the world to see what I do."

An exhibit of Loftin's work is on display at the Tulsa restaurant Karmichael's, 314 E. 3rd St., through July 4. For hours, call (918) 587-5200. Loftin's work is sold at the M.A. Doran Gallery, 3509 S. Peoria, Tulsa, where her work will be featured in a show this fall. For dates, call the gallery at (918) 748-8700.



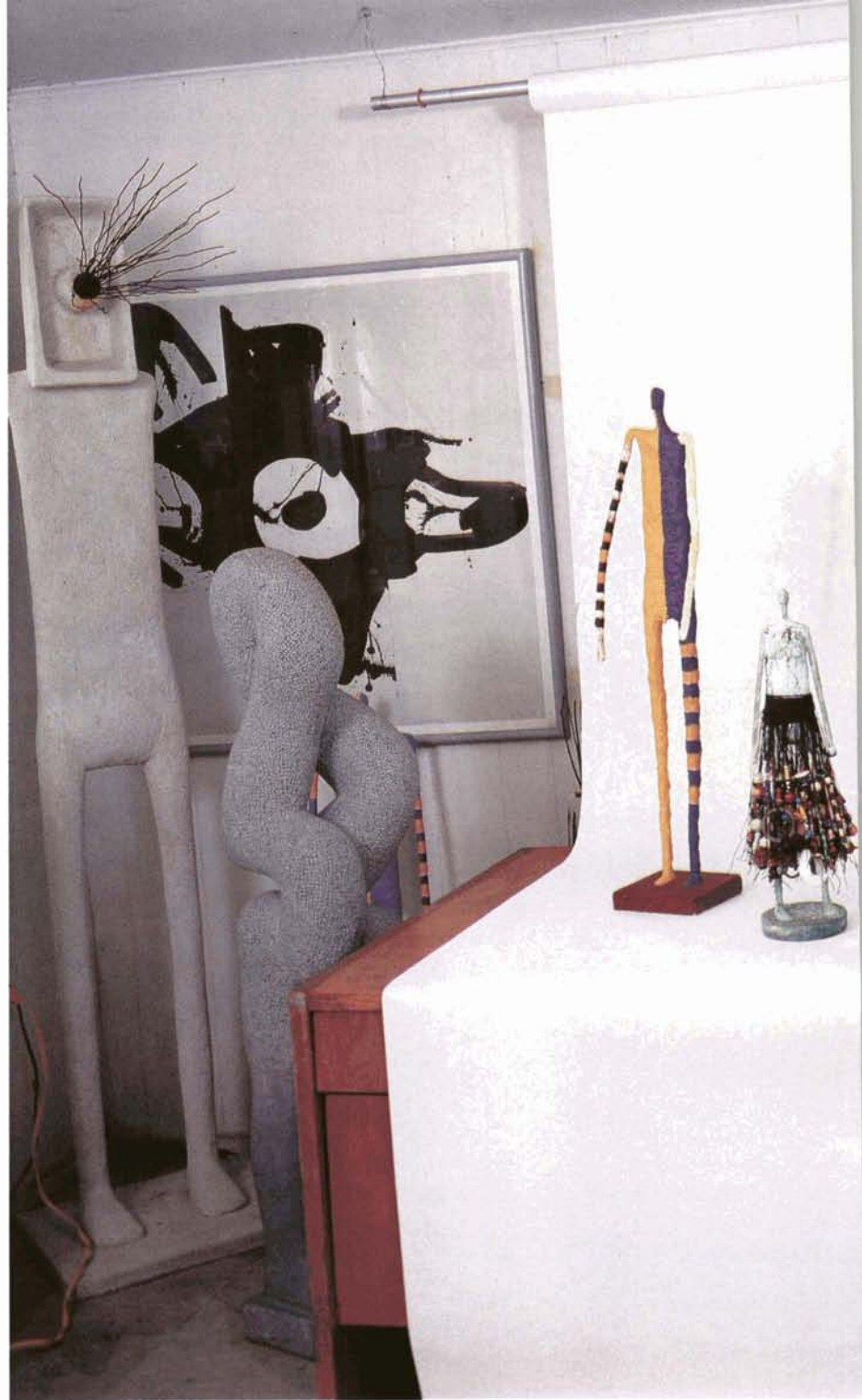
Small Town Sculptor

Sculptor Ron Allen's studio was once his grandfather's tool shed. It is tucked behind a small, white house on a Wewoka side street and as you walk towards it along a narrow sidewalk, you see the transforming hand of the artist everywhere: Iron rods from old oil-field equipment are rooted in the ground like an industrial trellis, scraps of steel hang on the wire fence, and pieces of carved alabaster rest in flower beds. If you had to hang a name on it, you'd call it an environmental folk art garden.

Inside the studio, Allen creates similarly eclectic sculptures. Kachina-like, most are adorned with scraps of everyday life: beads, bottle caps, artificial flowers, springs, tiny stuffed birds hanging upside down—all tied to the figures with waxed thread. "I guess you'd call them archetypes," says Allen. "I've had these little figures running through my mind for years."

Expressing himself didn't always come easy for this Wewoka-born artist, especially in his home town. Back when he was in grade school, a teacher covered a blackboard with butcher paper and announced to the class that it was the background for a cowboy and Indian mural. Allen and a friend volunteered as artists, and "He liked what we did so much, he wouldn't let anyone else touch it," remembers Allen.

The memory stands out, because the assignment was the sum total of art



Ron Allen at home in Wewoka.

instruction (or encouragement) he received in Wewoka schools. In high school, he says, he can't recall the word "art" being uttered once. "I never even imagined I could make a living as an artist," he says. "I got married and sold insurance, which I hated. I'd always done some drawing, which I never showed to anybody." Allen divorced and eventually enrolled in commercial art classes in Dallas—which he also hated.

It wasn't until he was working in Washington state in a student arts program that he stumbled into his future. And he literally did walk into it—he and a friend found an old, abandoned rock quarry. After lugging blocks of stone home, Allen executed his first sculpture with a claw hammer and screwdriver.

For the next twenty years, Allen created abstract sculptures, mostly in alabaster and cement. He maintained



*The articles
he suspends from
his figures are*
METAPHORS
*"They stand for
little treasures
and lost loves."*

stone pieces to smaller, lighter figures for which he first welds a steel armature, then wraps in white Portland cement.

The artifacts he suspends from them are metaphors, he says. "Some are absolutely worthless, and some have meaning. They stand for little treasures and lost loves. I see them as happenings in our lives. We all have our little histories." Since Allen put all the paraphernalia he'd collected for the past fifteen years on the first few sculptures, he now haunts local garage sales and resale shops for material. His daughter, Jade, helps too, collecting scraps in a cardboard box she's labeled "The Junk Man."

A year ago, when Allen showed several of his figures in an exhibit in the Seminole Nation Museum, he found that no matter how much he had changed, some things in Wewoka had not. Some people walked in, took one look at the abstract sculptures, and demanded: "What is it?!"

In Oklahoma, Allen's work is sold at Route 66 at 50 Penn Place in Oklahoma City. (405) 848-6166. Allen also will make sculptures that add items supplied by individuals to the ones he selects. (He calls them "Portraits.") Contact Allen at (405) 257-6998.

studios in Oklahoma City and Santa Fe and sold his work at outdoor festivals. Four years ago, his parents invited him and his wife and daughter to move into his grandparents' empty house across the street. After years of alternating city life with time spent in a town where studio space was at a premium, the idea of working in a small, quiet town was appealing. They moved in, hanging his collection of Salvador Dali etchings in the room where a portrait of his great-

grandmother, who was Blackfoot, used to hang.

It was a good move. "In Oklahoma City, I had people in my studio all the time," Allen says. "I'd see so many artists on the verge of doing art and then not doing it. And Santa Fe can feel like a vacuum. Here, I can work twenty-four hours a day without any interruptions."

In Wewoka, Allen's work has undergone a transition—away from larger

Dream Weaver

In southwestern Oklahoma, State Highway 6 runs toward Granite through a landscape that is almost purely grass and sky. It is the kind of place, says painter Ashley Wilson, that nourishes the work of an abstract artist. "The Great Plains are like the ocean, and the ocean is a symbol of the unconscious."

Years of painting in solitude in a barn on a Greer County farm have given Wilson the ability to lay statements like that right out on the table. A fringe of brown hair flops over onto the painter's forehead, making him seem more like a graduate student than the middle-aged artist he is.

Painting is one of three paths that Wilson has pursued; the other two were preaching and social work. (Of his career as a preacher, he says, "I zigged when I should have zagged." He preached one sermon.) He decided to become a full-time painter even though the demand for large-scale abstract paintings in Oklahoma is limited. "I can't express the way I feel about reality in any other way than painting,"

As the only son of an U.S. Agricultural Service employee, he spent his childhood living around the world—Ethiopia, Vietnam, Nigeria, Italy. In Vietnam, Wilson took lessons from Ng Tri Minh, a leading painter. Paintings from that period (bright impressionistic street scenes) still hang in his living room, evidence of a precocious beginning. Wilson chuckles when he remembers how, as an eleven-year-old, he walked around the classroom critiquing the work of Ng's adult students.

Wilson left the States when he was five, and though he spent most of his childhood overseas, Granite, where his mother was born, always felt like home. "I had a ball cap with a 'G' on it I wore around. I wanted a home town." When his father retired, the family moved to a farm in Greer County.

As much as Wilson loved Oklahoma, he didn't think it was realistic to try and study art here. "You have to be near the masterpieces." Wilson studied figure drawing at the Maryland Institute of Fine Art, and at Hunter College in New York City, he studied under Helen Frankenthaler, one of America's leading abstract expressionist painters in the 1960s. Frankenthaler, as well as her husband, Robert Motherwell, have been potent influences on Wilson's work. In New York, "I tried to learn the language of modern art...to internalize it," he says. "To attain originality, that is a different thing."

For that, Wilson returned to Oklahoma.

One barn barely contains his monumental canvases, most of which fill a ten-by-twenty-foot wall. A second barn serves as his studio. His themes are big, too. The character of the human heart, God, oppression, struggle, redemption. All of his work proceeds from four dreams he had in 1973, images that appear as metaphors in his paintings. "It didn't come into my grasp until 1991," he says.

His paintings strike some viewers as drab and dark, while others find them powerfully moving. His godmother and neighbor, Madge Mitchell, once asked him: "Why don't you express fulfillment?"

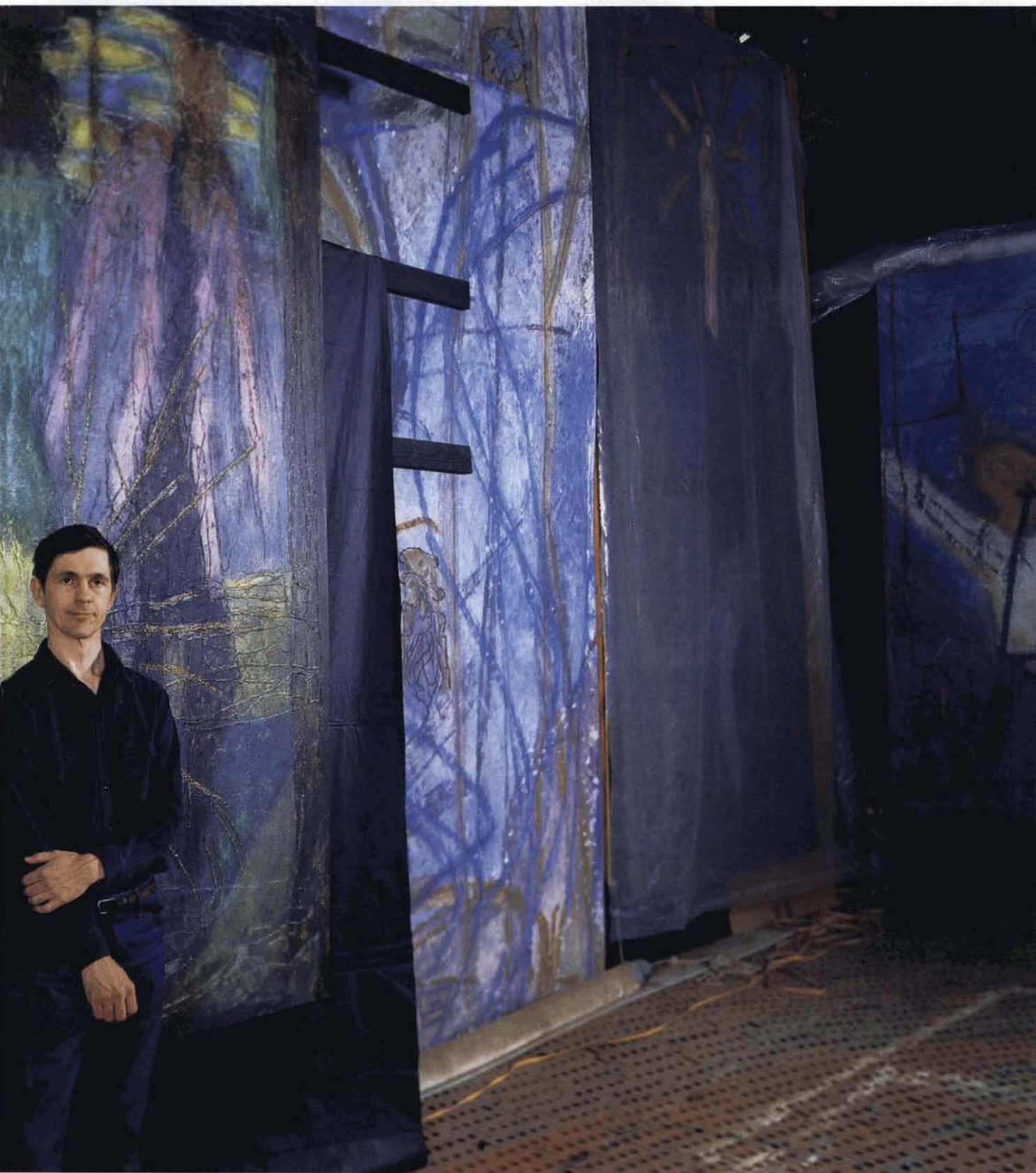
"I wish I could," was Wilson's answer.

Much of Wilson's work is not for sale. The artist values his solitude but you can contact him at (405) 535-4492.

Barbara Palmer is a senior editor for Oklahoma Today. Dennis J. Holm is a Norman-based photographer.



"I tried to learn the language of modern art. To attain



Ashley Wilson in his painting-filled barn near Granite.

ORIGINALITY *that is a different thing."*

The Nature Conservancy succeeds by having only one agenda: buying back our natural resources.

By Burkhard Bilger

The caves of the Ozarks lie beneath northeastern Oklahoma like buried palaces—whispered about, imagined, but rarely discovered. Formed in an area untouched by glaciers and flooding seas for hundreds of millions of years, these caves are among the oldest in North America. Water, growing weakly acidic as it seeps through the exposed Ozark limestone, patiently widens their cracks into chasms, their chasms into haunting chambers. It winds in and out of this underground city like a secret messenger, running past meadows and narrow valleys, bumping over brook bottoms, careening over falls, then vanishing into a sinkhole without a trace, only to emerge nonchalantly at the foot of a hill miles away to lose itself again in the crowded waters of another stream.

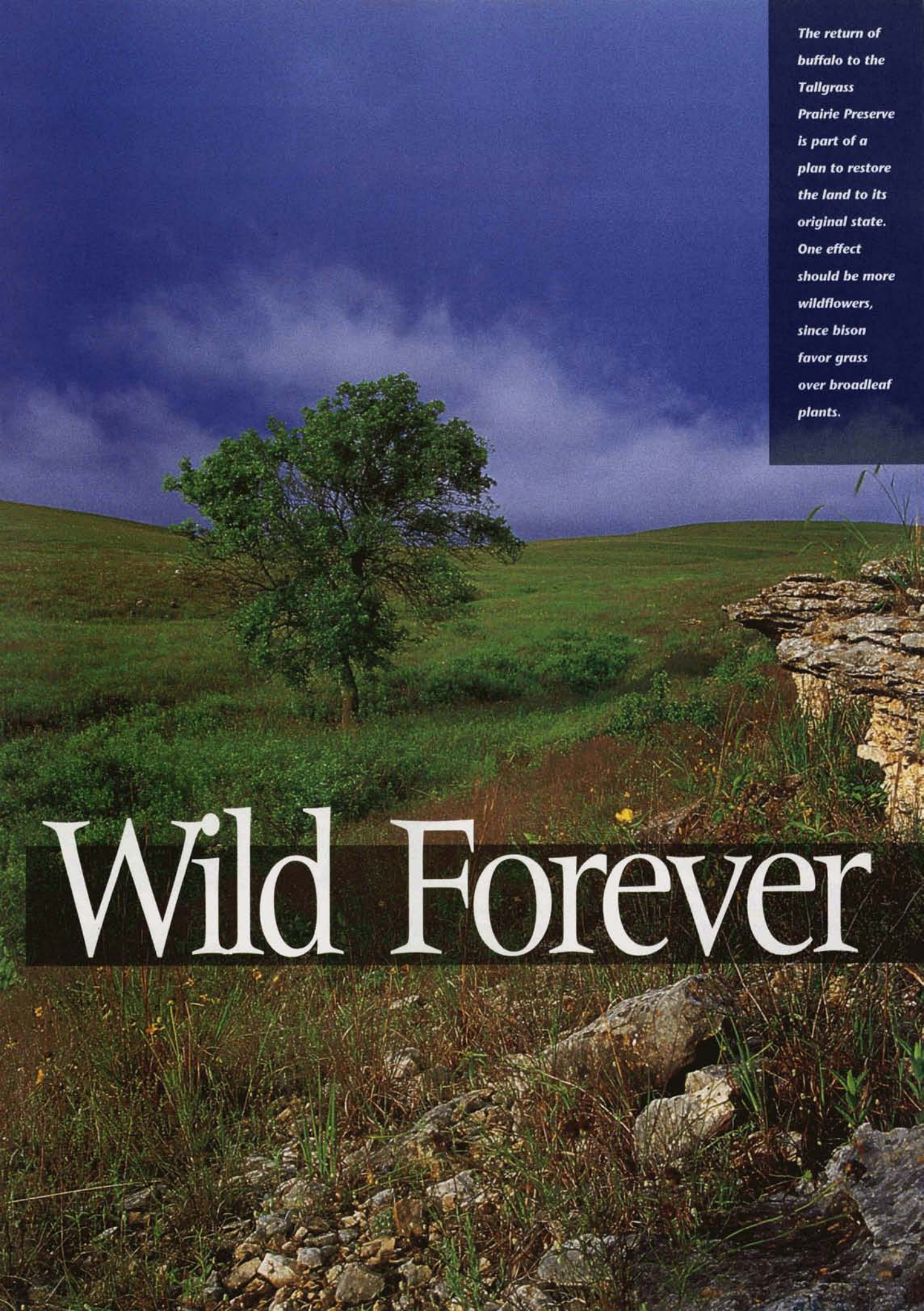
Don Russell is one of the few people in the world who can say where the water's been. A plastics consultant and retired mechanical engineer from Tulsa, Russell grew up near New Mexico's Guadalupe Mountains ("the best caving country in the world"), where he started exploring the caves around Carlsbad at the age of twelve. Since moving to Oklahoma in 1951, he has spent nearly every free hour searching, mostly fruitlessly, for caves to rival those of his memory. By now, he has a mental map of the Ozark underground; he knows all its trap doors and hidden passages, and he has followed them as well as his human insoluble frame will let him. In forty-two years' time, he has discovered hundreds of crawl spaces and dozens of caves, but only a handful of what he calls "true caverns": great rocky maws toothed with stalactites and stalagmites and gummed with rippling stretches of flow stone.

Russell tells his fellow spelunkers about most of his discoveries, but he keeps these big caverns to himself. It is not that he wants to horde their wonder. He keeps his secrets for the caves' sake. Russell knows that if word gets out of a miniature Carlsbad in northeastern Oklahoma, the place will soon be beset by fossil hunters, spray-paint-wielding kids, and well-meaning but clumsy tourists. The rock formations might be

The Indian blanket (Gaillardia pulchella) blooms in dry soil from May to September.



HARVEY PAYNE



*The return of
buffalo to the
Tallgrass
Prairie Preserve
is part of a
plan to restore
the land to its
original state.
One effect
should be more
wildflowers,
since bison
favor grass
over broadleaf
plants.*

Wild Forever

able to withstand the abuse, but the creatures that have evolved in the absolute dark and silence of the cave would be overwhelmed by a sudden invasion from a sunlit world. "It's a dilemma," he says. "If a few people see them, the next thing you know a hundred people will, and then pretty soon there'll be nothing left."

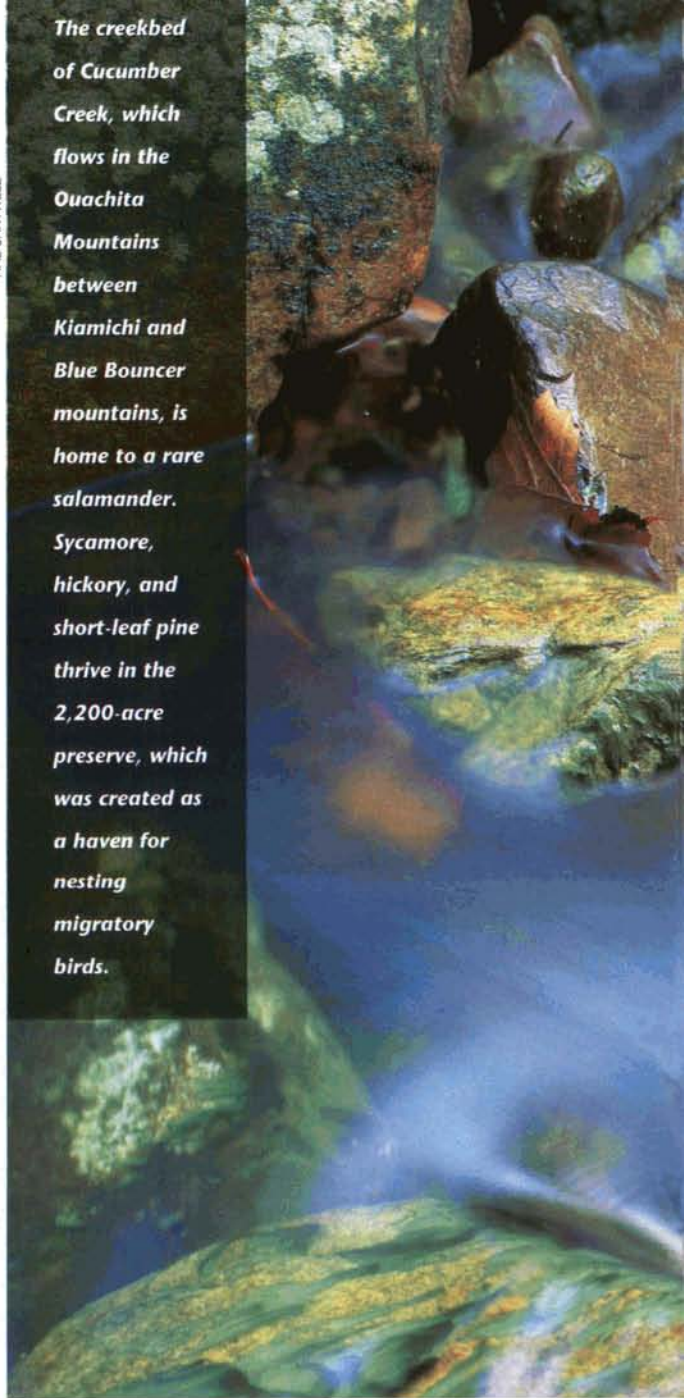
Conservation of Russell's kind might seem like lonely work, at odds with the breathless proselytizing practiced by most environmentalists. But for the last twenty years, Russell has had steady, silent support from one of the state's most powerful environmental groups: The Nature Conservancy. Back in the early 1970s, Russell and geologist Jeff Black first proposed that the Nature Conservancy's national office buy Charley Owl cave in Adair County. Carved from limestone millions of years ago, then lifted out of the ground as the Boston Mountains grew, Charley Owl is home to a colony of sixteen thousand endangered gray bats. Russell not only convinced the Conservancy to buy the cave, he bought some of the adjacent land himself and offered his services as caretaker. He still travels there from Broken Arrow once a week, checking up on the cave and spending the night in the cabin he built there. The Nature Conservancy, meanwhile, has kept up its end of the bargain: its brochures make no mention of Charley Owl's location.

Cucumber Creek is what most people imagine when they read, "Nature preserve." The water runs. The trees have regained their aged authority. And chain saws seem safely at a distance.

Such arrangements are typical of the Conservancy. Effective without being political, acquisitive without raising the hackles of landowners, popular without pandering to the public, the Conservancy has become the richest environmental group in the country and far and away the most effective such group in the state. "We don't tie ourselves to trees, we don't tell people how to behave, and we don't sue people," says Herb Beattie, executive director of the Conservancy's Oklahoma chapter. "We have one and only one mission: to protect rare plants and animals and their communities."

The method behind this mission is deceptively simple. Guided by a list of threatened and endangered species compiled by the Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory, the Conservancy buys the species' habitat or convinces local landowners to protect the species on their own. Sometimes the Conservancy keeps the land it buys; sometimes it sells the land, with conservation easements, to the state or federal government; increasingly often, the Conservancy puts together patchwork preserves of private, public, and Conservancy land to cover a single threatened habitat. "The (national office) has a

The creekbed of Cucumber Creek, which flows in the Ouachita Mountains between Kiamichi and Blue Bouncer mountains, is home to a rare salamander. Sycamore, hickory, and short-leaf pine thrive in the 2,200-acre preserve, which was created as a haven for nesting migratory birds.



\$150 million land protection fund that it can loan to different chapters," Beattie says. "That, plus great credit worthiness, allows us to move fast on real estate."

The Conservancy has rarely moved faster than in Oklahoma. In 1986, the local chapter simply vaulted past its formative stage—the decades of grassroots organizing and weary pamphleteering that establish most environmental groups—by attracting an astonishingly powerful steering committee: Joe Williams (chairman of The Williams Companies), Bob Lorton (publisher of the *Tulsa World*), Bank of Oklahoma chairman Leonard Eaton, Kerr-McGee chairman Frank McPherson, and philanthropist William G. Kerr. Within three years, these men had helped push through the largest land acquisition in the Conservancy's history to that date: the thirty-thousand-acre Tallgrass Prairie Preserve. Ten more preserves followed, more than four thousand Oklahomans joined the Conservancy's



TRUE LOVE & TROGLOBYTES

On a cold, still morning in the Ozarks after temperatures have dropped during the night, a cave will sometimes give itself away by exhaling. In Oklahoma the temperatures inside caves stay at a steady fifty-four to fifty-eight degrees Fahrenheit. Therefore, when it is cold enough outside, the cave air will turn to steam as it escapes above ground. What's worse, if a cave's breath doesn't betray it, its bats probably will. On summer nights along the bluff lines, bats will flock home by the thousands, waving their wings at the cave's entrance for all to see.

All of these facts have made life very hard for the blind Ozark cavefish. Like the blind crayfish, the cave salamander, the grotto salamander, and other troglobytes (lifelong cave dwellers), this fish evolved in total isolation and total darkness for thousands of years. Then settlers began pushing into the Ozarks. They drained and flooded the watersheds that fed the caves' underground streams, dumped contaminants into the ground water, and finally mucked around in the caves themselves. In the process, troglobytes became Oklahoma's most endangered group of species.

Twin Cave, in Delaware County, is home to one of the last five known populations of Ozark cavefish in Oklahoma. When the Nature Conservancy bought the cave four years ago, its first task was to restore the cave's population of gray bats (sometime cave dwellers or troglodytes) by keeping people out during maternity season. That done, attention turned to the cave's most spectacular feature: the King Room. Previous owners had tried to turn this football field-sized chamber into a restaurant.

Thankfully, they had only managed to build a giant platform.

"It took 37 people 634 man-hours to clean up that room," says Billy Howard, a masonry contractor who volunteered for the job with his fiancée, Beth Moore, a fellow spelunker. "We tied ropes onto the telephone poles and railroad ties and pulled them out with a four-wheel-drive Suburban." Concrete foundations were destroyed, graffiti was washed off the walls, and a gate, culvert, and concrete steppingstones installed—all in the dead of winter.

Howard and Moore stayed around after the grunt work was over to help document the Ozark cavefish ("they have little knobs in their heads that can sense prey, but they're easy to catch: they're blind"). He estimates that it will take fifty thousand years for the cave to recover from all the disturbance. But he has high hopes for Twin Cave and others protected by the Conservancy: already, twenty-one thousand endangered gray bats, almost the original population, have found their way back to Twin Cave.

The troglobytes did have to bear one last indignity before their return to blissful isolation: on January 9th, Bill and Beth celebrated their wedding in the King Room. With the Conservancy's blessing, they held a small, casual ceremony next to a snow-white stalagmite. "We told everyone to wear their caving clothes," Howard says, "and we made sure that nobody was standing on the flow stone."

—Burkhard Bilger



Plecotus townsendii in flight.

MERLIN D. TUTTLE

ranks, the board of trustees helped raise a \$1 million land preservation fund, and the Oklahoma Natural Heritage Inventory was kicked into gear with Conservancy funds. Then last year, in a final cymbal crash to this crescendo of activity, Joe Williams was elected chair of the Nature Conservancy's national board of governors.

A glance at the donors that such high-powered leaders have attracted—Phillips Petroleum, Southwestern Bell, Chevron, Kerr-McGee, and Weyerhaeuser—can make the Conservancy seem a corporate endeavor, a kind of Rockefeller Foundation for the environment. But corporate backing can only buy so much when ninety-seven percent of Oklahoma's land is privately owned and largely not for sale. The Conservancy's unheralded strength lies outside of the boardroom, among the volunteers building fences, cataloguing plants, and taking care of rare species from the Panhandle's mesas to the swamps of

Russell has had steady, silent support from one of the state's most powerful environmental groups: The Nature Conservancy.

the southeast, among landowners voluntarily protecting the Ozark big-eared bats and the black-capped vireos on their property. In a state sometimes too divided by its passion for independence and privacy, the Conservancy's preserves have given people a chance to express their common love of the land. Remote, often unmarked, and rarely accommodating, these preserves demand a difficult devotion—and the rare wisdom to preserve nature for its own sake.

An Ocean of Grass

Driving north of Pawhuska along the rolling infinity of the Tallgrass Prairie, the barriers and boundless possibilities of conservation in Oklahoma are easy to see: barbed wire fences line every road, but unplowed prairie stretches endlessly beyond them. Three generations of environmentalists tried and failed to pull these fences down, to turn this prairie into a national park. Arguing that the tallgrass was North America's most endangered ecosystem (the Flint and Osage hills of Kansas and Oklahoma are the largest patch of a virgin prairie that once covered a fifth of the continent), they

proposed a 300,000-acre park in the Flint Hills to protect it. When that failed, they suggested a more moderate "national monument." They tried steamrolling plans through Congress and winning over locals town by town. Nothing worked. The ranchers who owned the land simply wanted no part of a prairie park. They trusted neither the federal government (out to condemn

their land) nor the Sierra Club and Audubon Society (out to destroy the ranching culture altogether).

By the time the Conservancy arrived here in 1989, ranchers in the region, backed by groups like the National Cattlemen's Association, had already shot down three prairie park proposals. Only one year before, a plan to create a park out of a 50,000-acre portion of three ranches in the Osage hills (including the vast Chapman/Barnard Ranch) had collapsed when the Sierra Club began to lobby for more land. Though bad feelings about the park still ran high, the Conservancy didn't try to mend them with more diplomacy and negotiations. Rather, it acted as the one thing local ranchers could understand: a business. After getting approval from the home office for this \$15 million project, Herb Beattie and his staff simply bought the 29,072-acre Barnard half of the ranch from a willing seller. In one startling stroke, a prairie preserve had been created—and who could argue with the Conservancy's right to buy a bit of private property?

Today, if you follow the signs north from downtown Pawhuska and keep on going when the blacktop ends, you'll see the fences start to disappear. Like the ocean, the landscape around you can seem unbearably monotonous or unendingly

Habitat Heroes

They are champions of the Ozark spider-wort, protectors of the prairie mole cricket, defenders of the Oklahoma phlox. They were once regular landowners, quietly going about their business, when a phone call from the Oklahoma Natural Areas Registry Program changed their lives—at least a little.

In the case of one Woodward County rancher, Registry Program director Melissa Nagel informed him that the rare Oklahoma phlox grew on his land; the man had never noticed the phlox on his

property before ("It's just a little old green plant with a small white flower, and it doesn't bloom very long"), and he didn't want to have to put fences around it. However, once Nagel explained that the Registry Program was purely voluntary, that he need only check up on the phlox from time to time, the man signed on.

"We work up a non-binding agreement," Nagel says. "The landowners agree to do what they can to protect the area, to notify us of any threats to the species, and to let us know if they decide to sell their land

so we can contact the next owner." Administered by the Oklahoma Nature Conservancy and the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation, the Registry Program has proven invaluable to state conservationists. When the state or the Nature Conservancy can't buy land with an endangered species on it, a registry agreement assures that the species will be afforded some protection. "If we can get a landowner to protect it, what better stewardship could you possibly want?" Conservancy director Herb Beattie asks. In

three years' time, fifty-nine landowners across the state have joined the program, helping protect American burying beetles, Black-tailed prairie dogs, Oklahoma beard-tongue, seaside alder, bald eagles, dwarf pipewort, and other species.

The black-capped vireos of central Oklahoma are a prime example. Blaine County hosts one of the last breeding populations of these small migratory birds in the world. Once at home from Kansas to Texas, the vireo has been pushed from its habitat by invading Eastern red cedar,

Pitcher's sage (Salvia pitcheri) blooms on dry plains throughout Oklahoma.

dramatic. The hills dip and heave to the horizon in every direction, seeming to promise that waves of tallgrass still wash all the way to Canada. With every season, the prairie assumes a new aspect. In the summer, it rolls away before you like a green carpet stitched with black-eyed Susans and purple coneflowers; in the fall, the wind ruffles the heads of golden grass like a horse's mane; in the absolute white of winter, you can feel like a tiny plastic bridegroom looking out across the staggered waves of frosting on a wedding cake.

Mary Barnard Lawrence has seen the preserve in more seasons than most. When she was a teen-ager and H.G. Barnard still owned the ranch, she worked as a cowgirl, riding her cutting horse into the herd at her father's side. "During World War II, most of the cowboys had gone off to fight, so I came back to work," she remembers. "I think the ranch would have survived without me, but at the time I felt sure that it wouldn't."

Back in 1989 when the ranch went up for sale, the Nature Conservancy's offer seemed the lesser of two evils. "The idea of splitting up that land was just too much to think about," she says, "but once I found out a little bit more about the Conservancy, I got used to the idea of selling it." Now, she's found,

human development, and brown-headed cowbirds that lay eggs in vireo nests. Through registry agreements, the Nature Conservancy has been able to manage the vireo on private land. "We've trapped close to two-hundred cowbirds and managed to drop the rate of nest parasitism by thirty to fifty percent," the Conservancy's Nora Jones says. "Now a troop of Boy Scouts is going to help us cut Eastern red cedar out of the habitat." Similar registry agreements have helped the Conservancy protect shorelines along the Canadian and

Arkansas rivers, where rare least terns lay their eggs in the open sand. According to Nagel, however, such cases are the exceptions. Most of the time, she says, "Absolutely nothing happens" once an agreement is signed. "What we're really saying is: 'Hey Mr. or Ms. Landowner, you're doing a great job, keep on doing what you're doing.' Hopefully, by giving them that extra sense of pride, they'll have a reason to pay a little closer attention to their land."

—Burkhard Bilger



HARVEY PAYNE

the Conservancy has shown her a perspective of the prairie she never knew. The Conservancy's biologists have painstakingly inventoried 220 plant species on the preserve so far—all in all, they expect to find more than 400 plant, 80 mammal, and 300 bird species. As the land rests under the Conservancy's care, these species are gradually reclaiming areas that they lost to decades of grazing. "Even as kids we never walked the land—cowboys just don't take walks. We rode through the grass on horseback or in a pickup truck," Lawrence says. "Now I'm learning things about grasses that I never knew." She has even joined a team of influential women who raise funds for the Conservancy by introducing others to the prairie's secrets.

Such changes of heart have been common around Pawhuska lately. Though the Conservancy hopes to buy 14,000 more acres of land adjacent to the Barnard Ranch, only whispers of protest have been heard. Publicity about the preserve has drawn 10,000 tourists to the area, boosting the town's faltering economy. With a herd of 300 bison arriving next October and slated to grow 1,800 strong within a decade, the preserve's tourist potential will only increase. Donations and volunteers, meanwhile, have begun to flood into the office of preserve director Harvey Payne. "I haven't done much in the way of fund raising, so I don't think it's me," he says, laughing.

When the Conservancy needed to build a massive fence to hold in the bison, oil-field supply companies like Helmerich and Payne and Sooner Pipe & Supply donated more than eight miles of heavy-duty pipe ("your grandchildren will have gray hair before it rusts out," Payne says), Webco Inc. cut it to length, and Arrow Trucking hauled it from site to site. When the preserve's roads needed improving, Calumet Oil provided the supplies and equipment. When the Barnard Ranch's Spanish-style headquarters needed renovation to house the preserve's staff, Chevron donated \$85,000 to complete the job.

At ninety-six years old, Effie Chamberlin couldn't volunteer to help build the fence or renovate the headquarters as others in town have. So she gave the Conservancy her twelve-room house. Built during Pawhuska's booming oil-drilling days, the house will probably be sold after Chamberlin dies. In the meantime, she's sure that her husband, a prairie lover dead twenty-

three years now, would be pleased with her decision. "Some people wanted the preserve and other people didn't, but I've been for it all along," she says, "and there sure isn't anybody saying anything against it anymore."

The Little & Famous

A sprawling ecosystem in and of itself, the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve was a rare purchase for the Conservancy: all the other preserves combined could fit into little more than a third of its acreage. More often, the Conservancy has bought small but vital chunks of habitat—home to endangered species or exceptional examples of a certain kind of landscape. The E.C. Springer and White Oak Prairie preserves contain patches of tallgrass surrounded by areas that have been completely plowed under. The 1,600-acre Black Mesa Nature Preserve hosts twenty-three rare plants and eight rare animals, including one of the world's rarest snails. Bought by the Conservancy and then sold, with conservation restrictions, to the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation, the Black Mesa Preserve also happens to contain the highest point in the state.

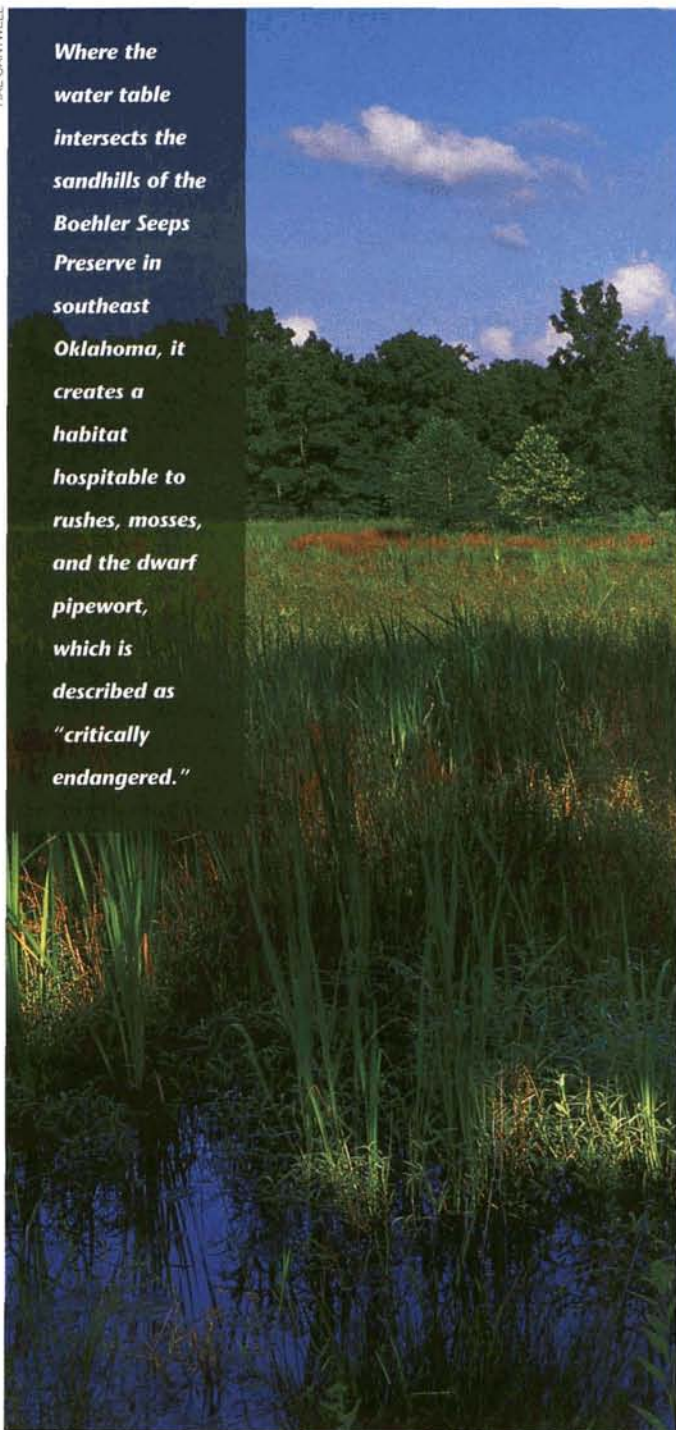
Hidden in the damp forests of Atoka County, near the Muddy Boggy River, the seeps are a geological oddity.

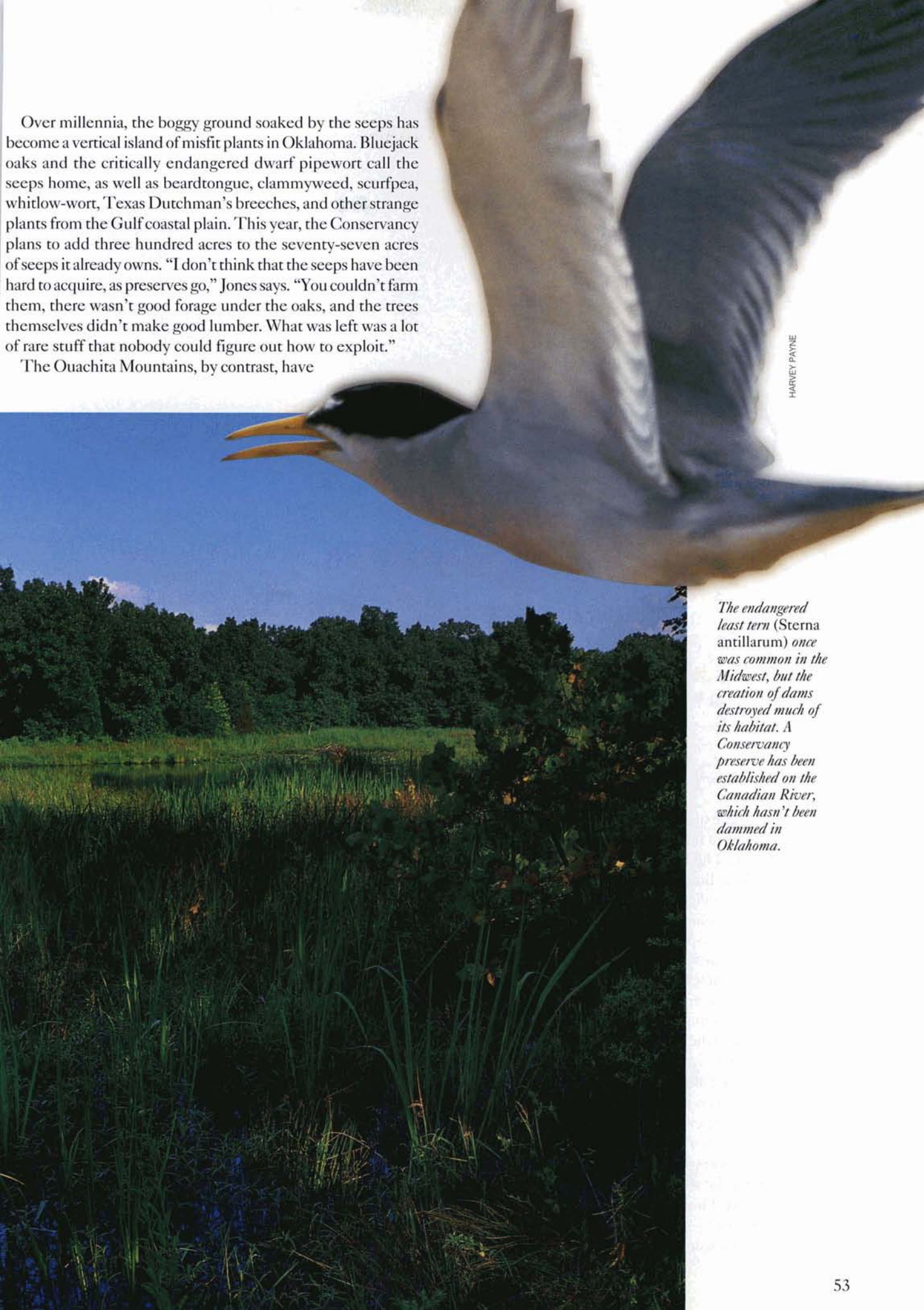
During most of the year, hikers stride past the piñon and juniper, mountain mahogany and lemon sumac along Black Mesa's sides to reach the view of five states from 4,973 feet on top: Texas to the south, New Mexico to the west, Colorado to the northwest, Kansas due north, and Oklahoma at their feet. Jim McPherson has more nearsighted concerns. A retired professor emeritus of botany from Oklahoma State University, McPherson now spends a good deal of his free time volunteering for the Conservancy—even bringing his own water pumping unit along when a prairie preserve is due for a prescribed burn. Last summer, McPherson began to inventory the plants on the Black Mesa Preserve. Over the course of twenty days on the Mesa, he estimates that he collected samples of about seventy-five percent of the area's plants. The other twenty-five percent will take him another two seasons. "I'm down to the uncommon ones," he says. "I'll have to start looking into the nooks and crannies." Such slow, persistent work informs the Conservancy's treatment of each preserve. "We can't just buy these places, put fences around them, and leave them there," Nora Jones, director of science and stewardship for the Oklahoma chapter, explains. "The landscape is too fragmented and disturbed. We have to actively manage them to maintain what we protected in the first place."

If Black Mesa is the state's most flamboyant location, jutting from the Panhandle like a flagpole for other states to see, the Boehler Seeps Preserve is Oklahoma at its most retiring. Hidden in the damp forests of Atoka County near the Muddy Boggy River, the seeps are a geological oddity. During the Cretaceous, when a vast sea covered this region, high dunes were deposited atop the clay ground. As the dunes and land around them gradually eroded, they assumed the guise of a gently rolling, unprepossessing landscape. After a storm, however, something magical happens: as rain soaks through the ancient sand, it hits clay soil halfway down. Forced to drain out horizontally, the water seeps from the sides of hills in springs and rivulets, like spouts in a natural fountain.

Where the water table intersects the sandhills of the Boehler Seeps Preserve in southeast Oklahoma, it creates a habitat hospitable to rushes, mosses, and the dwarf pipewort, which is described as "critically endangered."

HAL CANTWELL





Over millennia, the boggy ground soaked by the seeps has become a vertical island of misfit plants in Oklahoma. Bluejack oaks and the critically endangered dwarf pipewort call the seeps home, as well as beardtongue, clammyweed, scurfpea, whitlow-wort, Texas Dutchman's breeches, and other strange plants from the Gulf coastal plain. This year, the Conservancy plans to add three hundred acres to the seventy-seven acres of seeps it already owns. "I don't think that the seeps have been hard to acquire, as preserves go," Jones says. "You couldn't farm them, there wasn't good forage under the oaks, and the trees themselves didn't make good lumber. What was left was a lot of rare stuff that nobody could figure out how to exploit."

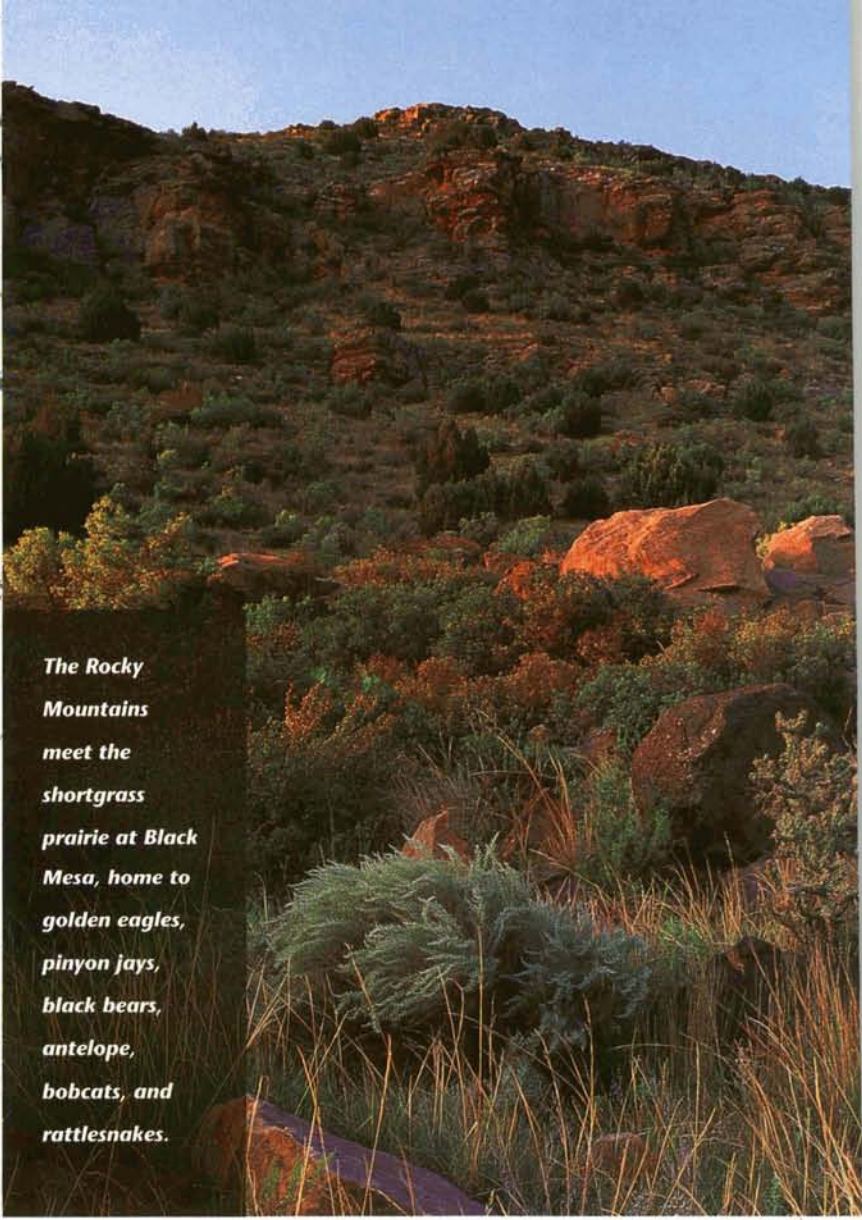
The Ouachita Mountains, by contrast, have

HARVEY PAYNE

The endangered least tern (Sterna antillarum) once was common in the Midwest, but the creation of dams destroyed much of its habitat. A Conservancy preserve has been established on the Canadian River, which hasn't been dammed in Oklahoma.



Orb-weavers (Tetragnatha) are indicators of habitats since they don't survive where pesticide use is high. This one was on the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve.



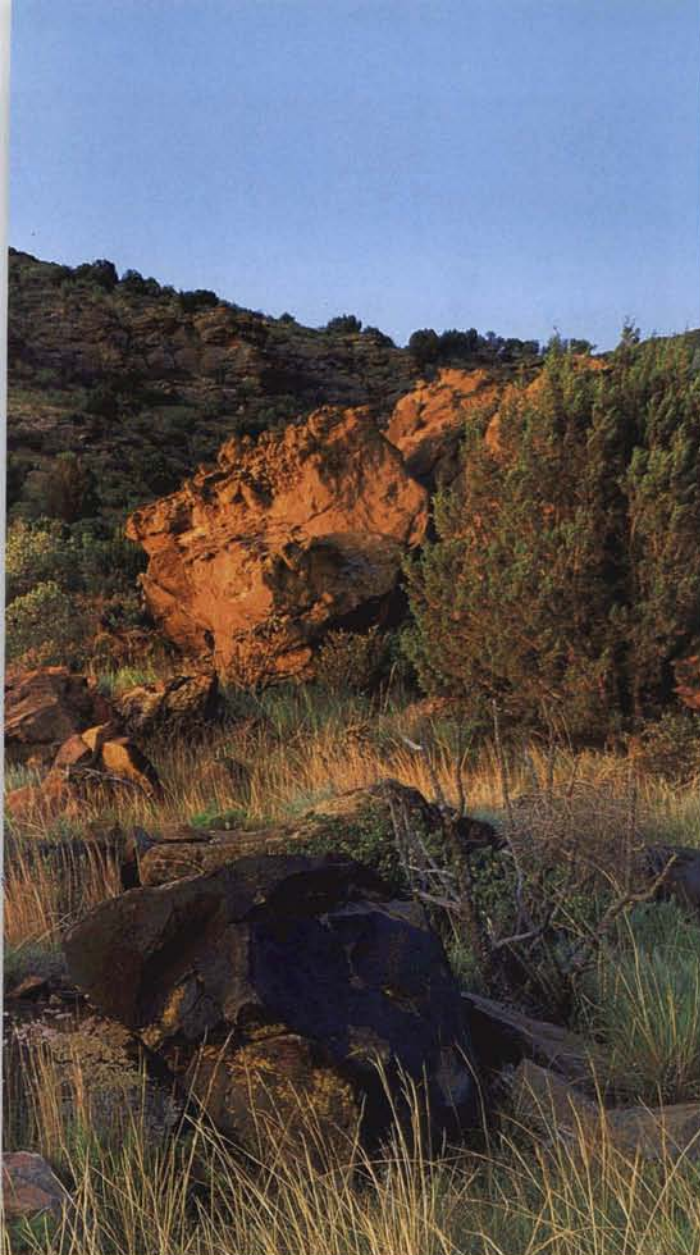
The Rocky Mountains meet the shortgrass prairie at Black Mesa, home to golden eagles, pinyon jays, black bears, antelope, bobcats, and rattlesnakes.

never wanted for exploitation. Their stands of tall, straight shortleaf pines were felled as soon as settlers found means to haul them away. The Cucumber Creek Preserve, between Kiamichi and Blue Bouncer mountains in LeFlore County, is no exception: its original trees were cut in the early years of the century. The wonder is that their successors never fell. Today, the 2,500-acre preserve holds some of the best remaining oak and pine forest in the Ouachitas. Home to the dusky salamander, the yellow lady's slipper, and the Ouachita Mountain shiner, Cucumber Creek is what most people imagine when they read, "Nature preserve." The water runs clear, the trees have regained their aged authority, and chain saws seem safely at a distance.

Cucumber Creek, however, only hints at the true grandeur of its ecosystem. The preserve only covers part of its watershed. The Conservancy can't burn underbrush on the preserve because it doesn't own the upland forest. Moreover, if any of the neighboring forests are clear cut, the preserve could be ruined as habitat for migratory birds, which need unbroken stretches of forest. This gets to the heart of a broader dilemma for the Conservancy—and most other conservation groups. While saving endangered species and protecting rare habitats

has an instinctive appeal, it is hardly cost-effective. When species are declared endangered, they are often too far gone to save, except at incredible expense. In the end, groups like the Conservancy might save more species and habitat by protecting a few broad, self-sufficient landscapes rather than myriad chunks of habitat. "Internationally, the real solution is big ecosystem protection rather than species protection," Conservancy executive director Herb Beattie agrees.

With the greatest variety of species in the state, the Ouachita Mountains seem a perfect candidate for such visionary schemes. "There are a whole bunch of critical places in the Ouachita Mountains that need protecting," Beattie says. "The notion is to protect this part of Arkansas and southeastern Oklahoma through some Conservancy ownership, some partnership, and a coordinated management of a number of preserves." Beattie calls the plan, "Politically different but fully as challenging" as anything the Conservancy has ever done. Now more than at any other time, he believes it has a chance to succeed: "The U.S. Forest Service has changed a lot in the last few years. The management of the Ouachitas is very enlightened compared to the past—frankly, even compared to the other national forests in this country."



Protecting the Ouachitas, long the epicenter of environmental controversy in the state, will take all the clout and grassroots credibility that the Oklahoma Conservancy chapter can muster. Still, in an environmental movement bristling with uncompromising demands, some activists will complain that the Conservancy is too moderate, too conciliatory: Why, with such assets and corporate connections, doesn't the Conservancy join the political fights to save wetlands or old-growth forests? Would it accept donations from a corporation that only wants to whitewash a tainted environmental record? The Conservancy makes no apologies. By working with everyone and censoring no one, it has become the largest operator of private nature preserves in the world. "There are lots of organizations with other environmental agendas—and I belong to a lot of them," says Nora Jones. "But I think our biggest strength is that we've picked a niche and stayed in it." Like a bird that nests in post oaks and leaves the pines to others, the Conservancy has chosen a particular corner of the environmental community to inhabit. In Oklahoma, it's still nesting on virgin land, with unbroken views of the territory. 

Burkhard Bilger is a contributing editor for Oklahoma Today.

Get There

Plants and animals are the first priority of the Nature Conservancy; as a result, some of its fourteen preserves are closed to the public, and only a few have amenities such as marked hiking trails.

The Tallgrass Prairie Preserve, however, is open around the clock year-round and is visitor-friendly. At the preserve parking lot, hikers can pick up brochures that describe the flora and fauna along two hiking trails, scenic overlooks, and a scenic drive. The headquarters, in a historic building once used by ranch hands, is open by appointment. To get to the preserve, turn north at the intersection of Kihikah Street and U.S. 60 in Pawhuska or on S.H. 18 in Shidler. (Signs direct travelers from either point.) On Monday, October 18, three hundred bison will be released into a five-thousand-acre enclosure on the preserve. Tours are planned for the following weekend. For more information, call (918) 287-4803.

To get to the Black Mesa Nature Preserve, follow S.H. 325 from Boise City west through Kenton and continue thirty-five miles to a blacktop road marked "Colorado." The preserve parking area is five miles north. A four-mile hiking trail to the top of the mesa can be navigated in about four to five hours, but most people make a day of it. Maps are available at the Black Mesa State Park office, along S.H. 325 west of Kenton, (405) 426-2222. Hikers should be prepared to carry in water.

The Cucumber Creek Nature Preserve in the Ouachita Mountains isn't closed to visitors, but the Conservancy staff encourages visitors to go instead to the Beech Creek National Scenic and Botanical Area. The Beech Creek road is on S.H. 63, three miles east of the Arkansas-Oklahoma line. (A sign marks the dirt road.) The two-and-a-half-mile-long Turkey Snout Trail begins about five miles to the north and takes hikers through mixed hardwood forest and wetlands. That trail connects with the Beech Creek Trail, which takes hikers to the Cascades, an area with waterfalls and pools, managed by the Sierra Club. For a map, contact the U.S. Forest Service ranger office in Heavener at (918) 653-2991.

The Conservancy publishes project guides for many of its preserves. To obtain copies, call (918) 585-1117 or write to the Oklahoma Nature Conservancy, 320 S. Boston, Suite 1700, Tulsa, OK 74103.

- 
- The Nature Conservancy's fourteen preserves are:
- 1 Black Mesa Nature Preserve (1,800 acres, with hiking trail)
 - 2 E.C. Springer Prairie Preserve (40 acres, with picnicking and hiking trail)
 - 3 Tallgrass Prairie Preserve (30,000 acres, with hiking trails)
 - 4 White Oak Prairie Preserve (exemplary tallgrass remnant, restricted use)
 - 5 Katy Railroad Trail (5.2 miles, jogging, bicycling, and walking trail from Tulsa to Sand Springs)
 - 6 Redbud Valley Nature Preserve (82 acres, with hiking trail)
 - 7 Twin Cave Preserve (rare bats and aquatic species, restricted use)
 - 8 Arkansas River Least Tern Preserve (1,400 acres, island nesting sites)
 - 9 Bald Eagle Winter Roosting Preserve (mostly private land along the Arkansas; some weekend tours)
 - 10 Canadian River Least Tern Preserve (16 miles along the Canadian, nesting sites, clear markers)
 - 11 Boehler Seeps and Sandhills Preserve (77 acres, two globally rare natural communities; 26 rare species)
 - 12 Cucumber Creek Nature Preserve (not restricted, but visits not encouraged)
 - 13 Little River Nature Preserve (15,000 acres, hiking trail, fishing, hunting allowed)
 - 14 Charley Owl Preserve (limestone cave with rare bats, restricted).

OUR CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON

With a reputation for losing and an ever-changing roster, nobody really expected the 89ers to bring home the pennant in 1992—which just made victory all the sweeter.

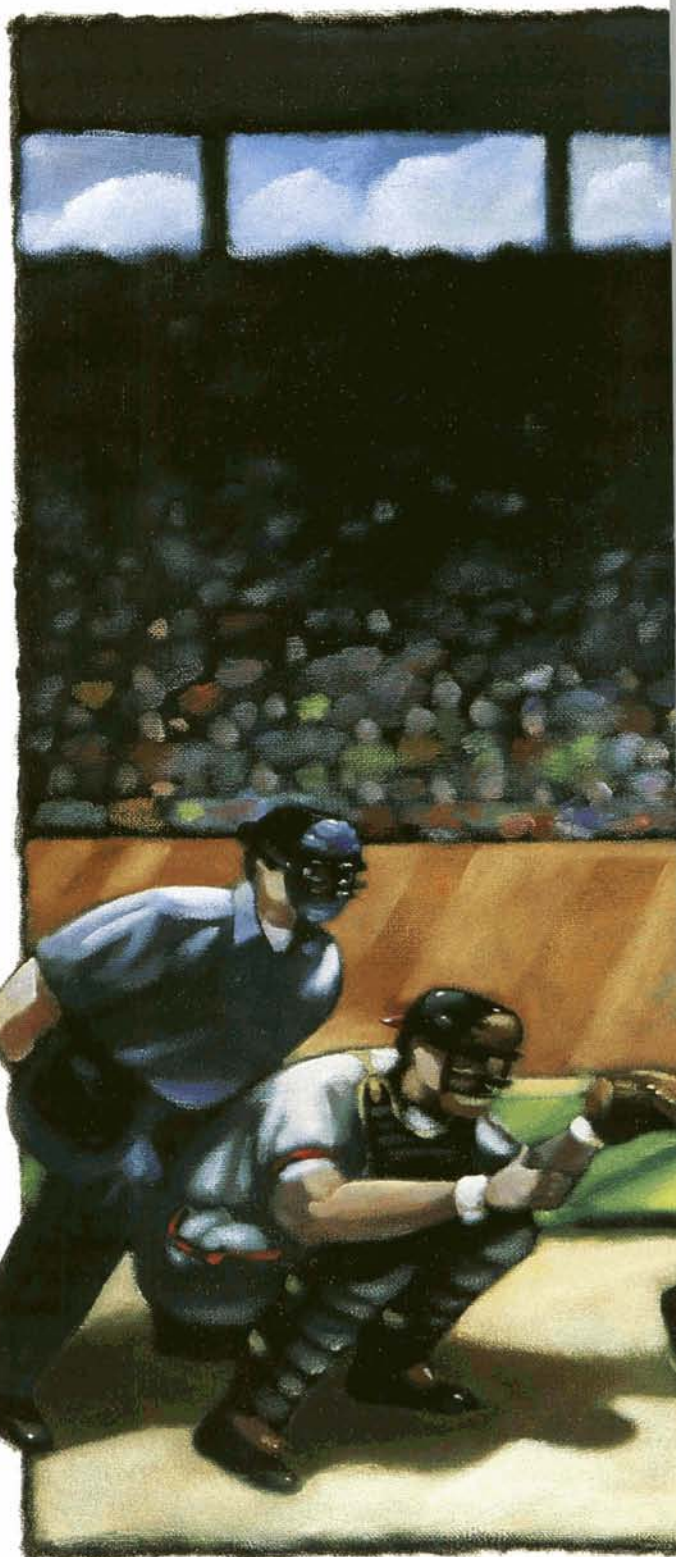
By Steve Fireovid

Something unexpected happened in Oklahoma City in the summer of 1992. For baseball fans who follow the Oklahoma City 89ers, it was nothing short of a miracle. For even the most unsports-minded, there was a lesson to be learned. The Oklahoma City 89ers are presently champions of the American Association, but to cut to the ending without understanding what this team endured to get there is to deprive oneself of a remarkable journey.

The 89ers are the Triple A affiliate of the Texas Rangers. In 1992, the Texas Rangers set a record for the number of pitchers used in a single season. For nearly every promotion to Texas, there was a demotion to Oklahoma City. Texas has never hesitated to make roster moves. In seasons prior when I rolled into All Sports Stadium with a visiting team, I was always amazed at the number of new faces wearing 89er uniforms. The activity of the '92 season, however, was frenetic even by Ranger standards. On seven separate occasions, Texas called up an 89er pitcher the very night he was scheduled to start for Oklahoma City. What had seemed an amazing whirl as an outsider felt like a tornado on the inside. The moves became so commonplace that I'd hardly notice a new face. Or a departed one, for that matter.

IT WASN'T IN THE STARS

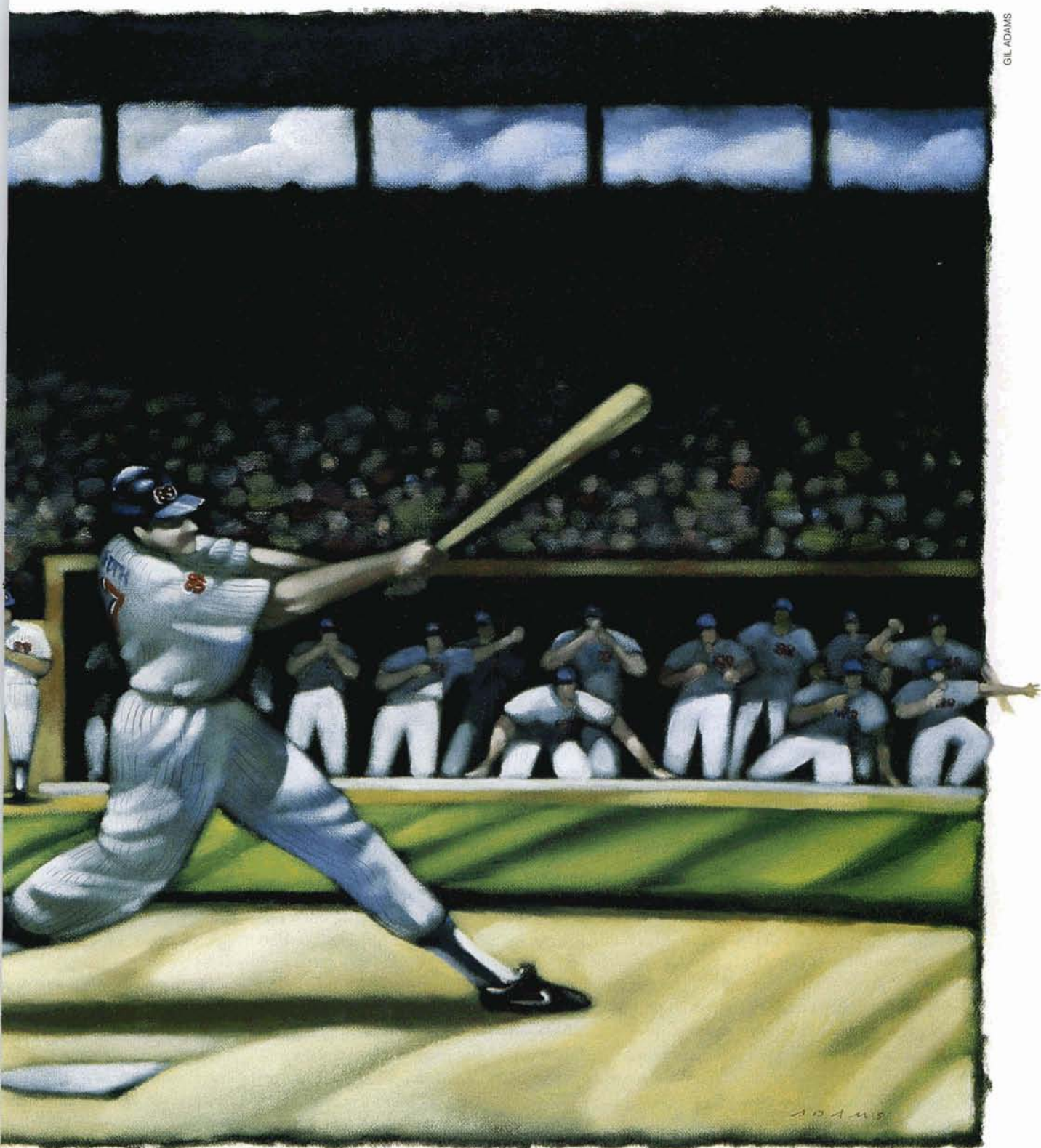
If the 89ers were a team of destiny, it certainly didn't show early on. Coming out of spring training, everyone in the Ranger organization knew there was some talent in Oklahoma City. For the first few weeks of the season, however, I was playing in Arlington, and 89er scores never seemed to make it as far south as the Ranger dugout. I remember very well, however, how things were when I arrived in Oklahoma City. We were losing. And we were losing ugly. The pitching was awful, the defense was worse, and our hitting was sporadic. We'd get beat one game 3-2, then come back the next night and get pounded 10-8. Nobody in the league even noticed. Triple A legend had it that opposing players coming to Oklahoma City for a series could count on four things: It would be hot. It would be windy. There'd be some rain. And the 89ers would lose two out of



three. Oklahoma City was the perennial doormat of the league.

Because we had neither the heritage nor a big following, there was no pressure for us to win. The only aspirations this team had were the ones the players themselves supplied. At first, we played only slightly better than our predecessors. But this was also an experienced ball club; our average age was older than that of the Rangers, our "parent" club. In fact, we were the oldest collection of players in the league. Maturity would pay dividends for this team.

Mid-season we were struggling. Our only break was that



three other teams in the western division of the American Association (Iowa, Omaha, and Denver) were having problems of their own. If the truth be known, a younger team probably would have panicked at the standings, but our collective experience told us such emotion was premature. We finally reached the .500 mark and, to all our surprise, found ourselves within striking distance of first place. Iowa was already clearly out of the picture, and Omaha, which led the division during the early part of the season, was fading as well. That left Denver, the defending champions of the American Association, and us.

WHO'S ON FIRST?

Even as first place loomed closer, there was little to get excited about. Most of the seats at All Sports Stadium remained empty, and the players rarely discussed post-season possibilities. Little more than a final score was dedicated to the 89ers on the nightly news. Nobody really expected anything significant to happen. Denver would win, the players would go home, and real fans could await the college football season. But baseball is a funny thing, and the end of the season found us fighting and scratching our way into contention. During the fi-

nal two months of the season, we rode a seesaw with Denver, a game or two all that ever separated us.

At this late date, the team suddenly began to take on a personality. The roster still churned at an alarming rate, but some constants surfaced from the many faces: Keith Miller, Rob Maurer, Steve Balboni. Keith was the type of player that you didn't appreciate until you saw him play five or six different positions and hit in as many slots in the lineup. Keith never gave the impression he was just filling in for a regular. Instead, he was the most regular player we had—we just used him all over instead of confining his abilities to one position. Keith was my roommate on the road, and I know being the jack-of-all-positions wasn't always as easy on him as he made it look.

Still, you could play all the defense in the world, and if you couldn't hit, you couldn't win ball games. Early hopes were pinned on first baseman Rob Maurer, the 1991 Rookie of the Year, but it wasn't until the second half of the season that he got comfortable in the box. Friendly by nature, Rob was famous in the league for slamming his helmet and bat into the dirt (or whatever was near) after making an out. Nobody was happier to see him come out of his slump than our bat boys.

Without a doubt, our most popular player, and rightly so, was Steve Balboni who led the league in home runs despite missing more than a month of the '92 season. I tried never to miss Steve's at bats, because you never knew when he might launch one 470 feet. Because of his size, the common assumption (including my own until I played with him) is that Steve swings as hard as he can and muscles the ball out of the park. Actually, he's one of the smartest hitters I've ever been associated with.

In fact, it was the unexpected qualities that players like Steve and catcher Ray Stephens brought to the game that became more critical as the season progressed. A .300 hitter with an arm as good as anybody in the league, Ray's athletic prowess was, in the end, secondary to the chemistry he brought to the team. A newly acquired catcher, he became the leader we so desperately needed. Ray always had a smile on his face. Testament to Ray's resiliency: he even smiled while playing cards before a game, and he was the worst card player I've ever seen.

And then, there was the pitching staff. Our bullpen was a liability up until June. In fact, the turning point of the season arguably was the day the bullpen gained the trust of our players. Once our hitters believed our pitchers could hold a lead, they were nearly unstoppable. There was never any doubt what kind of team we were—we were an offensive club. We didn't win many games 2-1, but we won more than our share of 6-5 games. The park we played in gets credit for some of the runs, but our hitters deserved most of it.

As pitchers, we tried to avoid giving our hitters any excuse to do anything less. Left-handed reliever John Barfield was throwing at least five miles an hour harder at the end of the year than he was in April and May. Don Carman, who I had played with in '84 with the Phillies, took it upon himself to keep everybody loose, and his presence made the game fun again for many of us. Meanwhile, Roger Pavlik developed some of the nastiest stuff in the league, only to be called up by the Rangers. He stayed long enough, however, for us to make the play-offs.

Truth was, there was never enough stability on our staff for pitching coach Oscar Acosta to design and stay with roles for

each of us. We were in a perpetual state of adjustment due to the call-ups by the Rangers. I was moved between starting and relieving seven times. When we made our climb to the top, we went with who was hot, regardless of the circumstances.

THE PENNANT DRIVE

For the last couple of months of the season, we played solid baseball. Thanks to our bullpen's effectiveness, we began specializing in late-inning, come-from-behind victories. Attendance picked up and the beginnings of a new attitude could be felt in the stands at All Sports Stadium. Our experience also began to show—not so much to the fans as to each other. We never put any pressure on ourselves to win. We went out to play and did our best. Our philosophy was simple: If we won the division and went to the playoffs, that was fine. If not, we'd go home. That was fine too. It had been an exhausting season—both mentally and physically—and most of us weren't going to make any more money as a result of being in the play-offs. So going home wasn't such a poor second.

Unconventional? Yes, but it worked for us. We played like there was no tomorrow, largely because we didn't care if there was one. If someone walked into our clubhouse an hour before a game, he could not have said whether we were on a winning or a losing streak. There'd be two or three card games going, Andy Griffith on the television, and a handful of players in the trainer's room. Everybody would be laughing and carrying on. Very seldom would the talk turn to baseball.

With only a couple of weeks left in the season, it became obvious that either Denver or us would win the western division. Omaha still had a chance, but it was a slim one. We'd go up by a game, only to have Denver go around us. It was a race that wouldn't be decided until the last day of the season.

On that fateful day, we were tied with Denver with just one game remaining for each of us. We were in Omaha, finishing out the season with the Royals. Denver was playing in Des Moines. While we were winning our game, Denver was beating Iowa 6-1. If the year ended in a tie, it would mean a one-game play-off—in Denver. We had been to Denver three different times in August (without much success, I might add), so the last thing we wanted to do was go back.

Then the news broke. We were in the ninth inning of our game when we heard that Iowa was tied with Denver. We won our game and, as was typical of our team, remained stoic about our play-off possibilities. We sat around the clubhouse in Omaha for a half hour or so, waiting on word from Iowa. When Tommy Thompson burst through the door, we knew Denver had lost. Less than an hour later, the new Western Division champions caught a flight out of town.

Back home, we had two days off before we had to host the first three games in a best of seven series against Buffalo. The day prior to the opener, it was as if a completely new team showed up for workout; it was the most dramatic attitude adjustment I've ever been associated with. There's a popular coaching phrase that goes, "You can't turn it on like a light switch." The idea behind it is that you can't suddenly decide you want to play harder and expect positive results. That law should now have an asterisk beside it, denoting the '92 Oklahoma City 89ers as an exception to the rule.

THE BEAUTY OF THE LONG BALL

The Buffalo Bisons were heavy favorites going into the American Association finals. They were the defending Eastern Division champions and had finished the season thirty games over .500, while we were only four over. They had solid pitching, a powerful lineup, and more speed than we did. Their roster was filled with players who will be playing for the Pittsburgh Pirates within the next year or two.

Shortly stated, it didn't matter what they had. The experience on our team, which had earlier appeared almost nonchalant, was now focused on winning. We finally had a healthy Jim Presley at third base and an everyday shortstop in young Larry Hanlon. Jim Walewander had also established himself as our second baseman. The emergence of these three players allowed Keith Miller and Chuck Jackson to anchor themselves in left and center field. It was the last week of the season, and for the first time we were fielding our best possible team.

I was given the nod to start the opener and pitched well into the seventh inning. We were ahead 7-3 (Ray Stephens hit a grand slam in the fifth), but Buffalo not only tied the game in the seventh inning, but went ahead 8-7 in the eighth. The crowd of nearly 11,000 became hushed.

The silence lasted only as long as it took Russ McGinnis to lead off the eighth inning with a homer. The score was again knotted at 8. Keith Miller doubled, followed by Dan Peltier, who hit a fly ball out. Buffalo intentionally walked Rob Maurer and Steve Balboni. The eventual Most Valuable Player of the play-offs, Ray Stephens again stood at the plate. He lifted a sacrifice fly, scoring Miller from third. The crowd went crazy. It was Ray's fifth RBI of the game, and the 89ers were one up on the Bisons. By most standards it had been an exhilarating game. It was nothing compared to the next night.

That second game found us entering the ninth inning behind Buffalo, 4-1. Ray Stephens doubled, then scored to make it 4-2. Chuck Jackson was on first base with two outs. Big Steve Balboni had injured his leg so badly the night before he could hardly walk, but manager Tommy Thompson decided to pinch hit Steve anyway. Steve hobbled to the plate and nearly fell to the dirt on his first swing. The next pitch was a fast ball, and Steve hit a home run that will forever live in folklore: It took him a minute to stagger around the bases. Fans were cheering, laughing, and crying—all at the same time. It was the most emotional moment not only of my career, but of every other 89er who had the pleasure to witness it. We knew, at that point, that we were going to win the whole thing.

Buffalo scored a run in the top of the tenth. Nobody on our team seemed concerned. We countered with a run in the bottom. Wayne Rosenthal shut the Bisons down in the eleventh. Buffalo pitcher Jim Tracy retired our first two hitters. Keith Miller was up, and he drove the first pitch over the right field fence. He was mobbed at home plate. We were halfway to becoming champions, and we could smell it. Deep down, I think Buffalo could too.

The third game belonged to our pitchers. Rob Brown, Kevin Blankenship, and John Barfield combined to hold Buffalo to two runs. Actually, the game was tied at two runs each until the eighth inning, when we erupted for six runs. Stephens again led the charge with three RBIs and another home run. We had so

much momentum offensively, we knew sooner or later we'd explode. Close to nineteen thousand fans jammed into All Sports Stadium for the final home game of the series. Most of them were still giving us a standing ovation as we departed from the field. We were moving to Buffalo's home park, but the Bison would have to beat us four straight games to unseat us.

When it came to the final game, it was a blowout in typical 89er style. Buffalo scored three times in the bottom of the second inning, only to watch us rebound with three runs of our own in the top of the third. It was academic from then on. Buffalo couldn't score enough, and we could do no wrong. Relief pitcher Gerald Alexander saved his best outing of the year for this final game. He went six innings, allowing no runs and striking out nine. We scored six runs in the fifth and then waited for Gerald to finish them off. Ray Stephens went three for four, with two more RBIs, and hit his third series' home run.

The final out was a sharp Buffalo ground ball to Hanlon at short, who flipped to Walewander covering second. We stormed to the mound and celebrated what had been settled a few innings earlier. The celebration moved into the clubhouse, where we acted rather juvenile for a couple of hours. Back at our hotel, owner Jeffrey Loria had a reception for us, but all things considered, it was a subdued crowd. The party broke up early, since a lot of players had to catch morning flights. The team disintegrated the same way it had assembled—quietly and without much attention.

There have certainly been teams with better records than us. Nobody was ever afraid to play us. But when it counted most, we came together in a way I will always remember. We didn't have many young up-and-comers who in their old age will get all fired up when they think back on what happened in the summer of '92. What we did have was a lot of older guys, like myself, who will recall this past season and softly smile. □

Steve Fireovid is a pitcher for the 89ers and author of The 26th Man: One Minor League Pitcher's Pursuit of a Dream.

Get There

Pitchers Roger Pavlik and Hector Farjado, first basemen Rob Maurer and Dan Peltier, and second baseman Jeff Frye aren't back for the 1993 season: all five were called up by the Texas Rangers. Returning members of the 1992 championship team include Steve Fireovid, Keith Miller, Steve Balboni, Ray Stephens, Chuck Jackson, Rob Brown, Gerald Alexander, and Larry Hanlon.

After 38 games of 144 were played this season, the record of the 89ers stood at 13 wins and 25 losses. "It's not time to hit the panic button," said spokesman Robbie Robertson. "We won the whole deal last year, and we were only four games above .500." (Before last year's play-offs, the 89ers were at 74 wins, 70 losses.)

The 89ers' last home game is August 29. Tickets are \$4 to \$6; children aged four and under attend free. Home games are played at All Sports Stadium at the state fairgrounds and start at 7:05 p.m. For the team's schedule, call (405) 946-8989.



On Drier Ground

For thirst-free, mow-proof lawns: xeriscape

Twenty years ago George Vaclavek got sick of mowing his lawn. Two cures exist for such a malaise: hire a lawn service or bribe a younger family member to do the job. Vaclavek, superintendent of grounds at Oklahoma City University, did neither. Instead he declared war on the lawn itself. Spring and fall, Vaclavek went into the battalions of Bermuda—attacking the turf with his trusty shovel and planting little trees—not two in the front and two in the back, but a whole army of little trees.

Not all of his neighbors looked favorably upon this manic tree planting. An elderly lady took to standing on the sidewalk a safe distance away, arms folded, silently scowling at Vaclavek as he lifted plants from their small pots and settled them firmly into the earth. Vaclavek, unruffled, tipped his cap at her and kept planting.

As his young trees grew taller, they, too, took up the fight, and the grass thinned, then retreated under the onslaught of shade. Today, a seemingly endless number of shrubs, ground covers, perennial flowers, and herbs carpet the ground beneath the trees. Pine, mint, and sage perfume the air. Because he took care to select drought-tolerant plants that don't need babying, Vaclavek doesn't water or fertilize very often. Ten years ago, he parked his lawn mower for good.

At about the time Vaclavek was turning his yard into a jungle, the city of Denver, Colorado, was in the throes of a severe drought and looking for solutions. Staffers in the city's water department coined the word xeriscape (zeer-i-scape) from the Greek word *xeros*, meaning dry, to identify low-water, low-maintenance landscapes like

Vaclavek. Xeriscapes not only conserve water but have since become a way of life in Colorado, Texas, California, and other dry western states, says Tim Schmoll, an Arizona native who teaches landscape architecture at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater.

John Steinbeck aside, Oklahoma isn't usually considered a "dry western state," but even here xeriscaping has begun to look pretty darn good. That is partly because water use in the Sooner State is projected to rise fifteen to twenty percent over 1990 levels by the year 2000 and partly because the giant Ogallala aquifer, which irrigates farms in the more drought-prone western part of the state, is also threatened with depletion, according to the Oklahoma Water Resources Board.

Since a lack of water can discourage economic development and because forty to fifty percent of all residential water usage goes for lawns and gardens, xeriscaping is fast being embraced as one way to stretch our water resources. The concept surfaced in Oklahoma City in 1991, when the OKC Water Department began promoting xeriscaping through brochures and model gardens. Xeriscaping was seen as a way to avoid summertime water rationing, explains Alaina Anderson, marketing coordinator for the department.

With a xeriscape, homeowners do not trade a beautiful yard for water conservation. As Vaclavek's lush yard illustrates, xeriscape is not "zeroscape," says Schmoll; it is not the stereotypical "green-painted gravel lot with a saguaro cactus stuck in the middle." A xeriscape can resemble a forest like Vaclavek's (he grew up in Michigan and loves trees), a prairie meadow, a



"When others are out mowing on Saturday morning, I'm watching my fish," says George Vaclavek.



Vaclavek planted a variety of hardy trees in his back yard—Arizona cypress, short-needled cedars, Limber pine—by simply putting out containers. “The trees plant themselves and seek their own ground level.”

formal English garden, or a conventional American yard. This chameleon quality is possible because xeriscape is more an approach to landscaping than a style. In fact, it boils down to seven steps: planning, soil testing, limiting turf, choosing appropriate plants, mulching, efficiently irrigating, and properly maintaining.

Anathema to most homeowners is the idea of limiting turf. Xeriscapers in Sonoma County, California, recommend eight hundred square feet or less of irrigated lawn per single family lot. Why limit turf? Most are water hogs; Bermuda grass, common in Oklahoma, requires six inches of water a month to look good, whereas a ground cover like winter creeper (*Euonymus fortunei*) is happy with one to two inches. Besides ground covers, drought-hardy shrubs, flowers, and herbs can be grass substitutes. Because many of these cannot be trod upon, xeriscapers often lay walkways in between the plantings. “Initially, it’s a little more expensive to plant plants than to lay sod,” says Jan Marshall of The Nursery, Inc., in Oklahoma City, “but in the long run xeriscape is cheaper.” Savings on water bills can reach sixty percent, not to mention the time and money that would other-

wise be lavished on lawn maintenance. Xeriscape plants don’t require the amounts of fertilizer some homeowners lavish on their lawns. To convert an existing yard to a xeriscape, Marshall advises that homeowners make a comprehensive plan but implement it in stages, like Vaclavek did, shooting for about a fifty percent reduction of turf area in three years.

Still, if you’re in a hurry and have a small yard, you can do what Richard Danel of Stillwater did. He hopped on a tractor and uprooted the grass with a box blade and then raked it off, finally he dumped multiple loads of mulch on the dirt until the “whole dad-blame lot was covered with wood chips.” When summer came, friends teased that he was “the only person in Stillwater who had a lawn that would burn,” says his wife, Dot. As the drought-hardy hollies, spiraeas, and cotoneasters grow and green up the yard, however, the Danel, who like to travel, will get what they wanted: an attractive landscape they can forget about. One adjustment: Richard says he has trouble remembering not to fertilize.

For those who believe the Constitution guarantees the rights to life, liberty, and a lawn, a more drought-tolerant grass like zoysia or one of the new improved varieties of buffalo grass may be a better first step. Buffalo grass thrives in western Oklahoma and the uplands of eastern Oklahoma, and it requires only about an inch of water per month, says Oklahoma City landscape designer Darlene Michael of Robert Lewis and Associates. It also has one advantage over many ground covers: you can walk and play on it. Her firm installed a buffalo grass lawn for a client in Edmond; the man literally mowed it once last summer.

A xeriscape hinges on picking the right plants. Not surprisingly, the most water-thrifty choices are often, like buffalo grass, Oklahoma natives. Oklahomans are rediscovering the value of that old tree that grows in the pasture, says Sherry Bieberich of Sun-

HARDY OKIE PERENNIALS

Butterfly Milkweed
Asclepias tuberosa

Low Poppymallow
Callirhoe involucrata

Bigflower Coreopsis
Coreopsis grandiflora

Flowering Spurge
Euphorbia corollata

Pitcher Heliopsis
Heliopsis helianthoides

Maximillian Sunflower
Helianthus maximiliani

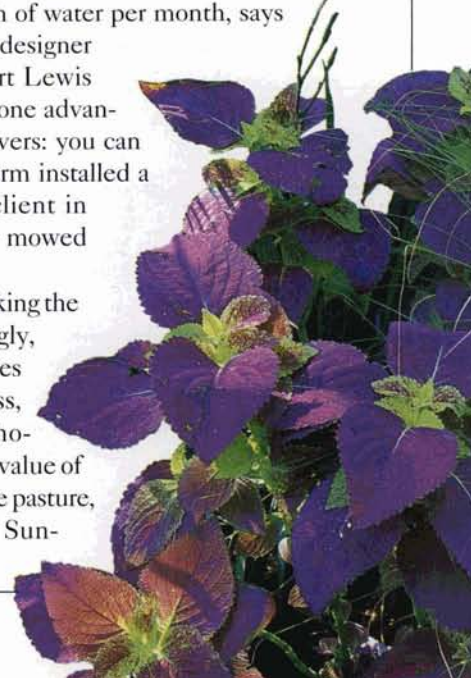
Common Rosemallow
Hibiscus moscheutos

Persian Nepeta Catnip
Nepeta mussinil

Ozark Sundrop
Oenothera missourensis

Sweet William Phlox
Phlox divaricata

Rose Verbena
Verbena canadensis





shine Farm and Nursery in Clinton; after all, that tree has survived without being watered, fertilized, or sprayed for bugs. Sunshine Nursery specializes in trees that can withstand western Oklahoma's extremes; its arboretum of four hundred trees lets customers see trees—like sumac—they might never have considered for landscape purposes, as well as improved versions of old pasture trees like Osage orange, hackberry, and elm.

Drought-tolerant plants, of course, need not be natives. Vaclavek has planted many herbs from the drier countries of the Mediterranean as well as trees from China and Japan. Other xeriscapers turn to shrubs bought in desert states that evoke the old West yet can adjust to Oklahoma's more abundant rainfall.

Even for those who can't relinquish their bed of water-guzzling zinnias, there are better ways. Establishing areas of high, medium, and low water use (called hydrozones) lets the gardener keep some old favorites. In a moist, shady area near the house, Vaclavek surrounded a Japanese maple (found near streams in the wild) with hosta, another moisture-lover, but in the dry, sunny strip between his sidewalk and the street he placed different plants—herbs and yuccas and tough perennial flowers like sedums and salvias.

The worst thing one can do is mix plants that belong in different hydrozones. Impatiens, which need regular watering during dry spells, planted in front of a juniper that needs water every couple of weeks, puts the juniper under stress and makes it more susceptible to disease.

Watering a juniper every day is wasteful, too. According to Schmoll, twenty-two percent of the water used in garden and lawn watering in Oklahoma is wasted by over-watering. Some of this is due to inefficient irrigation systems. Spray heads meant for lawns waste water when used on shrubs. A more efficient head for shrubs and trees is a bubbler, and more efficient yet is a drip emitter—small amounts of water drip slowly (measured in gallons per hour) to the root zones of the plants, and there is no run-off. Less expensive alternatives to an entire irrigation system are soaker hoses or PVC pipes drilled with tiny holes. However, Vaclavek feels an automatic timer should be at the top of everyone's water-saving list. As Marshall points out, "It's just human nature to forget and leave a sprinkler running."

Xeriscaping, as landscaper Jan Crowe of Tulsa puts it, "is drought insurance," but since the last few years have been unusually wet in Oklahoma, convincing Oklahomans of the need to conserve water now is "a little like selling ice cubes to Eskimos," admits Schmoll. Lowell Brauser of OK Scares in Oklahoma City agrees. He finds customers are presently more attracted by the time-saving rather than the water-



Vaclavek drove around looking at what plants flourish on old estates before planting pink veronica, blue salvia, and sunkist arborvitae where his lawn used to be.

saving characteristics of xeriscapes.

Now retired, George Vaclavek is pleased with the way things have turned out on his lot. In the summer his yard is an emerald oasis where the temperature drops twenty degrees from street to door. Beneath the thick mulch of leaves and pine needles is soil as rich, dark, and moist as chocolate cake. In winter, when the lawns of the neighborhood have faded to blonde, Vaclavek's mini-forest of pines and junipers is still green. Birds flock in, and instead of shunning him, his neighbors now ask for plant starts. Best of all, says Vaclavek, "When everyone on the weekend is pushing a lawn mower, I can sit back and have a cup of coffee."

Maura McDermott of Checotah is a contributing editor to Oklahoma Today.



Getting There

The Oklahoma City Water Department (the folks charged with keeping Cityans in water) helped bankroll model xeriscape gardens at both Will Rogers Park and the Myriad Gardens in Oklahoma City. At Will Rogers Park, three gardens that require different amounts of water—from low to medium to high—are laid out side by side. Different kinds of mulch and irrigating systems are also demonstrated. Inside the Will Rogers' conservatory, garden labels and a brochure explain xeriscape techniques. The park is at 3500 NW 36th Street.

A xeriscape garden has also been planted at the Crystal Bridge Tropical Conservatory at the Myriad Gardens (identifying labels should be up by the end of the summer). The conservatory is on Reno, between Robinson and Hudson, in downtown Oklahoma City. For brochures, write OKC Water Department, 100 N. Walker, Oklahoma City, OK 73102. (405) 297-3807.

Sunshine Farm and Nursery, which specializes in drought-resistant trees, is a mile north of Clinton on U.S. 183. (405) 323-6259.

Vaclavek's garden in the historic Gatewood district is sometimes on master gardener's tours; for information, call the Oklahoma State University County Extension office at (405) 321-4774.

Advertisers in this section are from **Red Carpet Country**, a seventeen-county region of northwestern Oklahoma. To find out more about travel and recreation opportunities in Red Carpet Country, call **1-800-447-2698**.

OKLAHOMA
NATIVEAMERICA



SPECIAL SECTION

CHEROKEE STRIP
1893 CENTENNIAL 1993



Catch Ponca City's Pioneer Spirit!

July-September Events

- | | | | |
|-------------|---|--------------------|--|
| July 4 | Centennial Plaza Dedication, Band Concert
<i>Civic Center</i> | Sept. 17 | Old Fashioned BBQ and Hoe Down, Featuring the Texas Playboys
<i>Rodeo Arena</i> |
| | Entertainment & Fireworks
<i>Rodeo Arena</i> | Sept. 10-12; 17-18 | "Oklahoma!"
<i>Ponca Playhouse</i> |
| Aug. 18-21 | 101 Wild West Rodeo
<i>Rodeo Arena</i> | Sept. 18 | Parade of the Century
<i>Downtown Ponca City 10:00 a.m.</i> |
| Aug. 28 | "Together We Ran"
Skits by Cherokee Strip Communities
<i>Poncan Theatre</i> | | Pioneer Woman Living History Exhibition
<i>Pioneer Woman Museum</i> |
| Sept. 16 | "This Land is Mine"
Statue Dedication
<i>Civic Center</i> | | "Riders in the Sky"
Concert
<i>Hutchins Auditorium</i> |
| Sept. 16-17 | Run of the Wagons '93
Wagon Train from State Line to Ponca City | Sept. 19 | Historic Homes Tour
Band Concert
<i>Pioneer Park</i> |

For more information, call: Cherokee Strip General Store & Centennial Headquarters, 1st and Grand, (405) 762-1893, Ponca City Convention & Visitors Bureau, 5th & Grand, 1-800-475-4400

OKLAHOMA
NATIVEAMERICA

FOR MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT RED CARPET COUNTRY
CALL 1-800-447-2698



CHEROKEE STRIP

CENTENNIAL PAGEANT

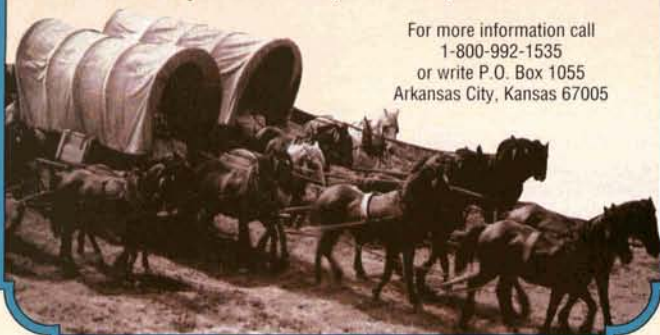
Arkansas City, Kansas

A dramatic portrayal of the Land Rush spectacle at the place where it all began.

- More than 300 Native American and Pioneer Living History Demonstrations
- Amphitheatre Seating for 10,000
- Daily Performances
- Cherokee Strip Hoe Down
- Historic Walking Tours
- Food, Music, Arts and Crafts

September 10, 11 & 12, 1993

For more information call
1-800-992-1535
or write P.O. Box 1055
Arkansas City, Kansas 67005



The 56th Annual FREEDOM RODEO AND OLD COWHAND REUNION

"The Biggest Open Rodeo in the West"

August 19, 20, 21

All day entertainment Saturday
featuring a FREE chuckwagon feed and
The Great Freedom Bank Robbery and Shootout.

For information, call (405) 621-3276.
Voted Oklahoma's "Outstanding Event" of 1992
by the Department of Tourism and Recreation.



Heritage Manor Bed & Breakfast

Aline,
Oklahoma

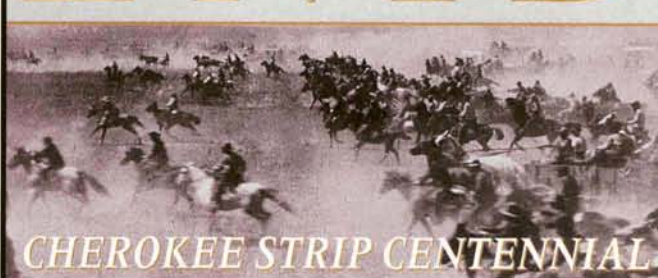


**Return to Turn-of-the-Century
charm and casual elegance in the
heart of the Cherokee Strip.**

- Quaint accommodations appointed with pre-statehood furnishings
- Library featuring more than 5,000 volumes
- Roof-top spa, fireplaces, three sundecks, courtyard, gardens, and even an ostrich farm
- All packages include full breakfast (dinner reservations accepted)
- Nearby attractions: Sod House Museum, Glass Mountains, Great Salt Plains, Alabaster Caverns

To reserve your escape to Heritage Manor, call (405) 463-2563

ENID



CHEROKEE STRIP CENTENNIAL

EVENTS

September

- 9-11** Cherokee Strip Stampede PRCA Rodeo
- 14-18** Cherokee Strip Centennial Celebration
Arts & Crafts, Food, Parade and more!
- 16-18** Living History Encampment
Historical Re-creations of Cavalry, Settlers and
Lawmen of the 1800's
- 18** United States Marine Corps Drum and
Bugle Corps and Silent Drill Team
Concert

For more information, call 1-800-299-2494

OKLAHOMA
NATIVE AMERICA

FOR MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT RED CARPET COUNTRY
CALL 1-800-447-2698



OKLAHOMBRES REVISITED

By Thomas R. Holland

A true history of the development of Oklahoma, as witnessed by Evitte Dumas Nix, then the youngest person ever appointed as U.S. Marshal.

The story follows Nix through his life, from homesteading in the Oklahoma Territory to firing the pistol shot at the Cherokee Strip Opening to making a career in radio, television and film.

"E. D. Nix was one of the most remarkable individuals of his time and his story will live on in the heritage of those who follow his footsteps."

—T. R. Holland

\$12.95 (Softcover) Send orders to Betty's Bookrack
Eastland Center, Bartlesville, OK 74006
(918) 333-7262 (major credit cards accepted)



E. D. NIX, U. S. MARSHAL
OKLAHOMA TERRITORY

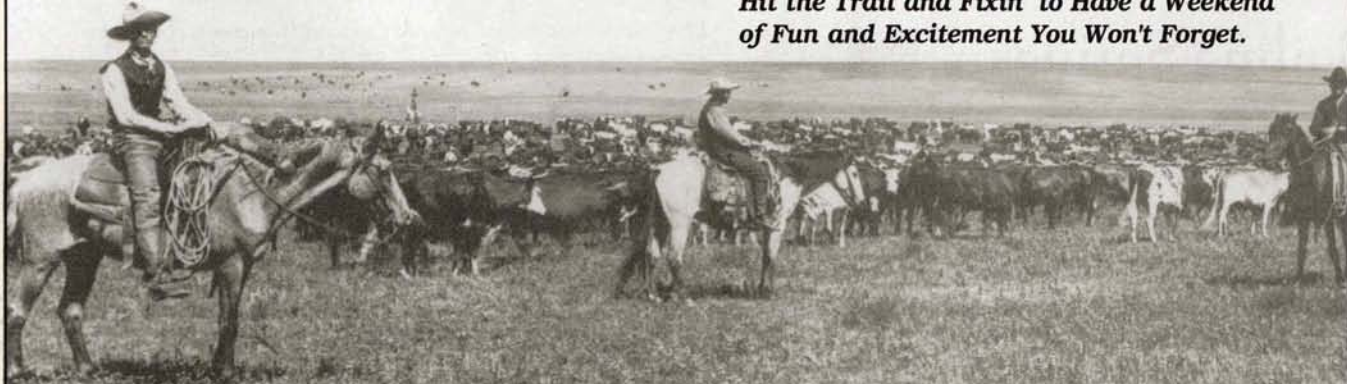
Yes, You'll Want to be In

HENNESSEY

*Where It All Begins Again
September 3, 4 and 5*

1893: The Chisholm Trail— A 1000-mile obstacle course from deep in Texas to Abilene— three months of sunup-to-sundown days snaking along, eating dust, living on beans and black coffee, sleeping in shifts, continually pampering thousands of high-strung longhorn steers across flooded rivers and parched prairies...

1993: Cowboys, Longhorns, Rodeos, Bluegrass Festival, Square Dancing, and Games. We're Roundin' Up Another Herd to Hit the Trail and Fixin' to Have a Weekend of Fun and Excitement You Won't Forget.



FOR INFORMATION CALL (405) 853-4888

OKLAHOMA
NATIVEAMERICA

FOR MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT RED CARPET COUNTRY
CALL 1-800-447-2698



OKLAHOMA STATE PARKS of the CHEROKEE STRIP

Alabaster Caverns



STATE PARK

Route 1, Box 32 Freedom 73842 (405) 621-3381

Opened by the state in 1956, Alabaster Caverns State Park features the world's largest gypsum cave. Visitors can tour the cave hourly or hike the park's colorful canyon trail. **FEATURES:** 30 Campsites · 3/4-Mile Guided Cave Tour · Swimming Pool · Volleyball · Horseshoes · Gift Shop

LOCATION: 6 mi. S. of Freedom on SH-50A.



Alabaster Caverns

Great Salt Plains



STATE PARK

Route 1, Box 28 Jet 73749
(405) 626-4731

Luring visitors from around the country, the salt flats of this popular park are literally a sea of salt on the Oklahoma plains. The area boasts the only spot in the world where visitors can dig for hourglass-shaped selenite crystals (from April through October). **FEATURES:** 8,890-Acre Great Salt Plains Reservoir · Cabins · 3 Camping Areas, 155 Campsites · Assigned Campground · Community Building · Swimming Beach · Boating · Water Skiing **NEARBY:** Homesteader's Sod House, Great Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge **LOCATION:** 8 mi. N. of Jet on SH-38.

Little Sahara



STATE PARK

Route 2, Box 132 Waynoka 73860 (405) 824-1471

FEATURES: Dune-Buggy Trails · 45 Campsites · Community Building
LOCATION: 4 mi. S. of Waynoka on SH-281.

OKLAHOMA NATIVE AMERICA

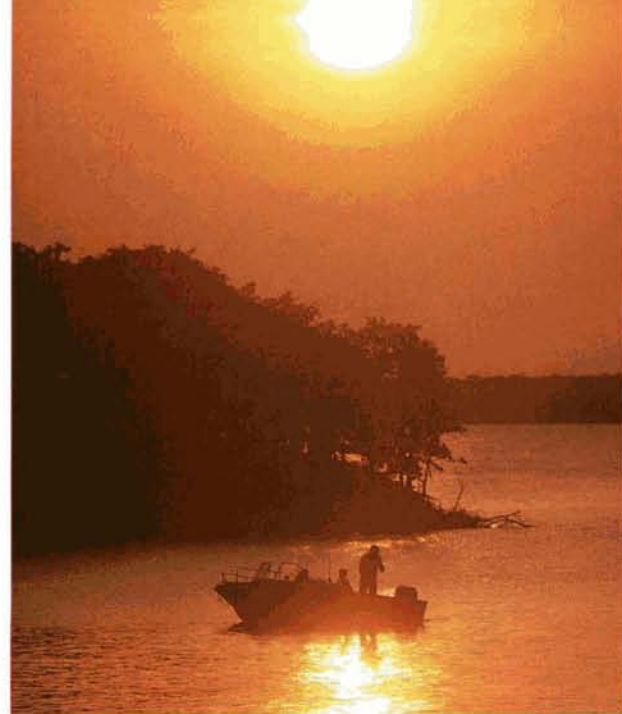


Cherokee Strip

Reservations & Information

All of Oklahoma's State Parks and Resorts offer special discount programs and affordable seasonal rates. To receive your FREE parks guide, or to place your cabin reservations, call

1-800-654-8240



Osage Hills



STATE PARK

Red Eagle Route, Box 84 Pawhuska 74056
(918) 336-5035 (Office)/(918) 336-4141 (Cabins)

A densely wooded park nestled in lush rolling hills, the area was once an Osage settlement. Winding roads, a wealth of scenery and the park's nearness to the Nature Conservancy's Tallgrass Prairie Preserve make it a peaceful summer getaway. **FEATURES:** 18-Acre Lake · Cabins (with fireplaces) · 2

Camping Areas, 20 Campsites · Group Camp · Swimming Pool · Boating **NEARBY:** Wootaroc Museum · Tom Mix Museum · Price Tower · Frank Phillips Museum · Prairie Song · Osage Historical Museum · Tallgrass Prairie Preserve **LOCATION:** 5 mi. N. of Pawhuska on SH-99, then 10 mi. E. on US-60.



Tallgrass Prairie Preserve

Boiling Springs



STATE PARK

Box 965 Woodward 73802
(405) 256-7664 (Office) / (405) 256-1206 (Pro Shop)

Famous for its cool springs that bubble up through the sands of the North Canadian River, Boiling Springs is a natural oasis on the rugged high plains of northwestern Oklahoma, combining wooded beauty and a unique Western heritage. **FEATURES:** 18-Hole Golf Course with Putting Green, Driving Range, Pro Shop and Cart Rentals · 7-Acre Shaul Lake · Natural Springs Cabins (with fireplaces) · 2 Camping Areas, 50 Campsites · Assigned Campground · 2 Group Camps · Swimming Pool **LOCATION:** 6 mi. E. of Woodward on SH-34C.

E·S·C·A·P·E

TO A RELAXING GETAWAY OR SECLUDED RETREAT

MARLAND MANSION ESTATE

CONFERENCE CENTER AND HOTEL IN PONCA CITY



Relax in an elegant setting with a resort atmosphere in the intimate conference center and hotel. Or stroll through the grand halls of the adjacent 55-room mansion known as "The Palace on the Prairie."

The Marland Mansion is a masterpiece of Italian Renaissance architecture built in the 1920s for Oklahoma's 10th governor, late millionaire oilman E. W. Marland, and his wife Lydie.

For reservations call (405) 767-0422, or 1-800-532-7559. For meetings contact: Patti Robinson, Executive Director, Marland Estate Conference Center, 901 Monument Road, Ponca City, OK 74604. Tell us you saw this ad in *Oklahoma Today* when making your reservations and receive a 10% discount. Based on space availability.

OKLAHOMA
NATIVEAMERICA

FOR MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT RED CARPET COUNTRY
CALL 1-800-447-2698



Oklahoma Today's READING GALLERY

Route 66: A Road Well Traveled

① **Route 66: The Mother Road** by Michael Wallis

The definitive Route 66 anthology, with illustrations and black & white and color photos. "This is a book all devotees of the American highway have been waiting for. The tone is as friendly as a big diner, where the conversations of people who have just met drift through the air like steam from their coffee cups." (Phil Patton, Author of *Open Road*) 243 pages. Hardcover: \$29.95. Softcover: \$19.95.

② **The Route 66 Traveler's Guide and Roadside Companion** by Tom Snyder

A guide to the eateries, browseries and scenery of America's fabled highway, from Chicago to Los Angeles. Illustrated, with maps and index. 136 pages. Softcover: \$8.95.

③ **Route 66** by Susan Croce Kelly, with a photographic essay by Quinta Scott

History of the highway from birth to re-birth as a national treasure. 210 pages, with black & white photos, index. Hardcover: \$27.95. Softcover: \$18.95.

Above the Plain

④ **The Ouachita Mountains: A Guide for Fishermen, Hunters and Travelers** by Milton D. Rafferty and John C. Catau

History, geography, wildlife and recreation of the entire Ouachita Mountain range of Oklahoma and Arkansas. Contains history and travel information of every town and city in the region. More than 130 black & white photographs with maps, figures and index. 308 pages. Hardcover: \$35. Softcover: \$18.95.

Living History

⑤ **Walking the Trail: One Man's Journey Along the Cherokee Trail of Tears** by Jerry Ellis

A Cherokee descendant takes a 900-mile journey—retracing the steps of his ancestors—and comes face to face with America in the process. 257 pages. Hardcover: \$19. Softcover \$9.95.

Frank's World

⑥ **Woolaroc** by Joe Williams, with the photography of Jerry Poppenhouse

This 92-page volume takes readers to the heart of Frank Phillips's enchanted retreat in the heart of Oklahoma's Osage Hills. To the oil-rich Phillips, Woolaroc was more than a ranch. It was a showplace, a place to host dignitaries in elegant, refined and purely Western surroundings. To visitors, Woolaroc is a wildlife refuge, nature trail, museum, Y-Indian Guide Center and lodge. Contains brilliant color photography of the ranch and lodge, and color plates of works on display in the Frank Phillips Collection. 192 pages. Hardcover: \$40.

Pavement Past

⑦ **Oklahoma Historical Tour Guide** by Burnis Argo and Kent Ruth; Edited by D. Ray Wilson

A practical historical guide to the Oklahoma road, from Kenton to Idabel. Softcover: \$12.95.

Prices do not include shipping and tax.
(see below)





Summertime Jams

A quartet of bluegrass festivals.

As summer heats up, so does the pickin' at bluegrass festivals, where the most country of country music reigns. Bluegrass festivals traditionally flourish during the dog days of July and August (it's part of their charm). Think shade trees.

Ask a handful of people to define bluegrass, and you'll likely come up with a fistful of answers. The music's genesis in Appalachian string bands is generally agreed upon, as well as the basic instrumental components—unamplified fiddle, mandolin, stand-up bass, guitar, dobro (the forerunner of the steel pedal guitar), and dulcimer. From there, the consensus unravels. Some purists don't count blues-flavored contemporary bluegrass as the real McCoy; others take the presence of an electric bass on stage in stride.

Ask, however, about bluegrass festivals, and you'll get a chorus. Invariably described as family-oriented, the festivals are paeans to traditional values. Folks are friendly, and even if they weren't, the improvisational nature of bluegrass would lend itself to informal, democratic jam sessions. And visitors are expected to be clean-living. "We do not allow any alcohol or drugs," says Bill Hacker, one of the organizers of the annual bluegrass festival in Langley. "It's as close as you can get to clean family entertainment, unless you go to church."

There is one other thing that all bluegrass fans and musicians seem to agree on: the word is GIT-tar.

July 24 Bluegrass and Dulcimer Days, Prairie Song, I.T., Dewey, (918) 534-2662. Music is a given at the Prairie Song village near Dewey (owners Marilyn and Kenneth Tate built a permanent stage and a saloon just for that purpose), but during the Bluegrass and Dulcimer Festival in July, the faux frontier town really lives up to its name. When the fiddlers get up to full speed on the "Orange Blossom Special," "we make 'em think we're running a freight train right through town," says event organizer F.D. "Sky" Shivers.

The Prairie Song festival is small as bluegrass festivals go: two local bands and individual dulcimer players will perform on the main stage. A sec-

ond stage is reserved for amateurs who would like to, in Shivers' words, "get a little seasoning." And, he promises, there will be jam sessions aplenty under the shade trees. Shivers also plans demonstrations of traditional crafts at the gathering, including rope and arrowhead making. Barbecue, hot dogs, hamburgers, ice cream, and other country-style food will be available for sale.

The village is built on top of an oak-covered ridge on a working ranch in the middle of a blue stem prairie. There are stone picnic tables and front stoops suitable for porch-sitting, but there aren't enough to go around, so visitors should bring their own lawn chairs.

Prairie Song, I.T., is five and one-half miles east of Dewey on Durham Road. Bartlesville, which has a number of motels, is one mile south of Dewey on U.S. 75. Bluegrass festival ticket prices are \$7.50 for adults; children under twelve are admitted free.

For more festival information, call (918) 534-2662. Telephone for the Bartlesville Chamber of Commerce is (918) 336-8708.

July 30 to August 1 Boiling Springs Bluegrass Festival, Woodward, (405) 254-9169. As much as members of the Northwest Oklahoma Bluegrass and Old Time Music Association enjoyed getting together to play traditional music, they disliked the fact that it was hard to expand their circle: the nearest bluegrass festivals were miles away. So last year, they started the Boiling Springs Bluegrass Festival.

This year's festival will fill two stages with a dozen or more top bluegrass bands—including the Bob Everhart Group, The Vinings, and Oklahoma's own Bonham Review.

And if you're wavering on whether you really should drag out that mandolin, consider this: if you bring along a musical instrument, you get to park close in (though non-musicians don't do too shabbily; mule-drawn wagons shuttle visitors from parking areas). Guitar, stand-up bass, mandolin, and fiddle workshops are scheduled for Friday and Saturday. Along with the music, demonstrations and sales of traditional crafts such as soap and broom making are planned.

Food, campsites, and cabins are available at the park, making the festival pretty well self-contained, says association president Jeannie Jacks. (Woodward, though, is only six miles away. Area motels offer weekend discounts for the festival.) But given the park's thick stands of hardwoods, you may want to stay put.

"It's fifteen degrees cooler out here," says Jacks (and there's a swimming pool).

Tickets for all three days of the festival are \$10 in advance or \$12 at the gate. Single-day ticket sales are priced at \$6 on Friday, \$8 on Saturday. For more information, call Jeannie Jacks at (405) 254-9169. Boil-



Dueling at the Boiling Springs Bluegrass Festival.

The Great American Indian Exposition

AUGUST 11-14
RICHMOND FAIRGROUNDS
RICHMOND, VA

- Over \$90,000 in prize money
- Art, Drums & Dance

Call 410-788-0254

Oklahoma Today Classifieds

FOR SALE • SERVICES • BUSINESS • ETC

GIFTS

OKLAHOMA PORTRAITS by CAROL CASTOR

"FINE ART GIFTS OF DISTINCTION"
Commissions • Original Oils & Pastels •
Limited Editions • Note cards/Postcards
121 Jennie Lane • Vinita, OK 74301
(918) 256-2112

ANTIQUES

Antiques, Primitives, Americana
Ole Shoppe
"B" S.E. & Steve Owens Blvd.
John & Mary Dalgarn, P.O. Box 1515
Miami, OK 74355 (918) 540-1760

REAL ESTATE

Own a piece of Oklahoma! 225 acres
near Elmore City. Pastureland, some
timber, one pond. \$400 / acre. Contact J.
Coffey (314) 961-5949.

WATER-SKI INSTRUCTOR WANTED

Experienced & mature. To teach my kids
basic skills 1-2 days late August 1993,
Tenkiller Ferry Lake. Reply
Roy Marokus, MD (806) 359-5133.
Daytime Only.

Oklahoma Today Classified —Rates—

\$2.75 per word for one issue

\$2.50 per word/three issues

\$2.00 per word/six issues

(Phone numbers and hyphenated
words count as two words)

To reserve your classified, send
your payment and a copy of the ad
you wish to run — specifying the
issues in which you want
the ad to appear — to:

Oklahoma Today Classifieds
P.O. Box 53384

Oklahoma City, OK 73152

Or call in your ad:

(405) 521-2496, or 1-800-777-1793

ing Springs State Park is on S.H. 34C, north of Woodward. For cabin reservations, call the park at (405) 256-7664.

August 4-8 The Hugo Bluegrass and Old Time Music Festival, Hugo, (405) 326-5598. "Bluegrass is the original country music," says bluegrass patriarch Bill Grant who has had a quarter of a century to polish his definition of the genre. "I call it hard times music. It's what people played back yonder before there was electricity."

Grant and his dad first held the Hugo Bluegrass and Old Time Music Festival in the cow pasture of their farm back in 1969. Now, twenty thousand people show up for the August festival, which appeared in *Country America's* 1993 list of the fifty hottest spots for country music in the nation (in spot number thirty-six).

Twenty-two of some of the best known bluegrass groups in the nation will play during the festival, including the The Lewis Family, The Bass Mountain Boys, and the Tennessee Gentlemen. At five days, the festival is one of the longest in the country. "We used to have contests, which stretched it out. And now people think they've got to have five days," says Grant. "You get a ball rolling, and it has to keep rolling. People plan their whole summer around it."

On Thursday morning, two of the bands who played at the first festival—the Goins Brothers, from Tennessee, and Stone Mountain, from Dallas—along with Choctaw Chief Hollis Roberts, will take part in a twenty-fifth anniversary celebration. (The Grant farm was originally a Choctaw allotment; Bill Grant's great-great-grandmother came over on the Choctaw Trail of Tears and eventually married a wheelwright hired by the federal government to repair wagons on the trip.)

Since the festival falls during what is usually the hottest part of the year, Grant offers strategies for keeping cool, most of them old-fashioned. "We've got cold showers, ice right here on the grounds, and lots of shade."

And since many of his guests roll up in recreational vehicles, Grant has twenty-seven mini-transformers and one employee whose job it is to keep them all running.

A note: This year's festival will be bittersweet for long-time attendees. Juarez Grant, Bill Grant's wife and partner, died of a heart attack on the last day of 1992.

Admission is \$10 daily, or \$40 for all five days. Electric hookups are \$6 a day, and the park opens the weekend beforehand for folks who want to stake out a prime campsite. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner are available, with menu items ranging from barbecue to fish to Cornish hens, along with hot dogs, hamburgers, and soda pop. No beer sold or allowed on the grounds.

For information about the festival, call Grant at (405) 326-5598 or write Route 2, Box 74, Hugo, OK 74743.

August 12-14 The Green Country Bluegrass Festival, Langley, (918) 425-5887. The Green Country Music Association booked the bands for the first-ever Bluegrass and Chili Festival originally held in downtown Tulsa, a huge and wildly successful event that had fans hanging out of hotel windows.

Then the Tulsa festival "got a little too big for us," says the Green Country association president Bill Hacker. A Tulsa radio personality now books the acts for the Tulsa festival, and the Green Country group has settled into Powderhorn Park, a shady grove in Langley on Grand Lake.

Which suits everyone just fine, since the Tulsa festival sometimes drifts into a contemporary vein. "Not at ours," says Hacker. "We play old folk songs and old-time mountain songs. People really like that old-time fiddling."

The club has built a log stage, and both RV and tent camping are permitted at the park. Wooden benches have been added in front of the stage, which most folks ignore, preferring to set their lawn chairs up between the rows.

Five local bands play on Thursday night and Friday afternoon. Five more bands—from Oklahoma, Missouri, and Arkansas—play Friday night and all day Saturday.

Tickets are \$15 for a three-day pass; Thursday night tickets are \$4; Friday tickets are \$6. A ticket for all day Saturday is \$7, \$5 for Saturday night. (918) 425-5887.

Powderhorn Park in Langley is two minutes from Grand Lake and a mile from Cherokee State Park. If you wander downtown, stop in at Dick's Grill, a Main Street institution for fifty years. Owner James Poe serves hamburgers and chicken-fried steak, makes his own rolls, and is a bluegrass picker himself (on dobro guitar). (918) 782-3624. Langley is on S.H. 28, just west of Pensacola Dam.

ENTERTAINMENT CALENDAR

The Boise City Bombing Revisited

July 4

Boise City, Fourth of July, 1943: The pop-bottle rockets had barely had a chance to cool down when, a few minutes after midnight, the fireworks began in earnest. The navigator for a Dalhart, Texas, bombardier crew flying on a routine practice bombing mission miscalculated the plane's position by forty miles. Instead of heading for a bombing range in Texas, the plane flew over Boise City, where lights left on in the courthouse square created a pattern eerily similar to the ones used to mark bombing ranges.

The crew dropped a total of six one-hundred-pound, sand-filled bombs before what appeared to be the target lights went out. The bombardiers headed back for Dalhart and, since nobody was hurt, the incident headed for a cherished spot in the repertoires of Panhandle storytellers.

On the fiftieth anniversary of the bombed mission, Boise City residents will unveil a permanent memorial to that night. In a cement crater downtown, one bomb will be "nestled in the bottom, angled towards Dalhart, Texas, from whence it came," says local attorney Stan Manske.

After a 2 p.m. unveiling July 4, celebrants will swap tales about the night at the local senior citizen's center. Organizers plan to honor unsung heroes of the incident, including Frank Garrett, now deceased, a utility employee who pulled his pants on over his pajamas, jumped into his car, and drove down to the power plant, where he flipped the central switch off.

Except for the forty-mile navigation error, the bombardier squadron was amazingly accurate. All bombs hit within an average of ninety-three feet of their targets, but some missed catastrophe by just a hair. (Tanks filled with gasoline were parked that night on the courthouse square.)

Actual damages were totaled up as a few lawns, a sidewalk, a church window (though some argued it was already cracked), and a garage behind a church parsonage. That bomb also uncovered a stash of girlie magazines hidden under the garage floorboards by a preacher's son.

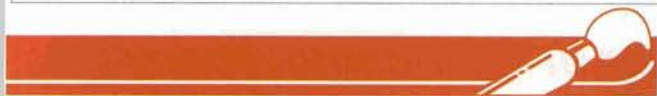
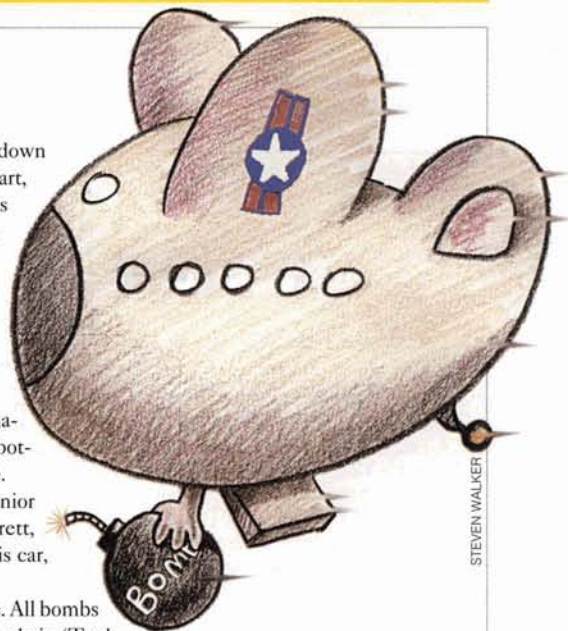
"It was the talk for a long, long time of course," says local Jerry Shannon.

The navigator for the mission was court-martialed, and the remaining crew members went on to glory, says Shannon. "They went from bombing Boise City to bombing Germany real good."

So far, invitations to the crew members to attend the Fourth of July festivities have not been accepted. "And we don't have any indication that they will," says Manske. "Yeah," says Shannon. "None of them wants to come back up here."

Other Boise City Fourth of July activities will include a fireworks and patriotic music program at the high school football field, a cutting horse contest at the fairgrounds, and homemade ice cream. (405) 544-3344.

—BP



MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

JULY

- 1-18 Sapang Bato: River of Rocks Ceramic Sculpture Exhibit, Corazon Watkins, Firehouse Art Center, Norman, (405) 329-4523
- 1-31 Art of Pioneers, Plains Indians and Pioneers Museum, Woodward, (405) 256-6136
- 1-Aug. 31 Tenth Anniversary Show, Dodson Galleries, Oklahoma City, (405) 840-7787
- 1-Sept. 26 Cross Timbers: Oklahoma Landmark, OK Museum of Natural History, Norman, (405) 325-4712
- 2-Aug. 22 Baroque Goldsmiths and Jewelers Art from Hungary, Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, (918) 749-7941
- 3-Aug. 1 Seeds of Change, Museum of the Great Plains, Lawton, (405) 581-3460
- 10-Sept. 12 Reflections of the American Indian, Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, Norman, (405) 325-3272

- 12-16 Handmade Books and Screens, Joanne Schiavone, Arts and Heritage Center, Ada, (405) 332-7302
- 12-Oct. 4 Sharks! Fact or Fantasy, Kirkpatrick Center, OKC, (405) 424-5545
- 16-Aug. 31 Kiowa Culture in Transition 1925-1966: The Photographs of Horace Poolaw, Gilcrease Museum, (918) 596-2700
- 16-Aug. 31 Edward Curtis on the Southern Plains, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, (918) 596-2700
- 17-Sept. 11 Charles Banks Wilson: Search for the Purebloods, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, (918) 596-2700
- 24-Aug. 22 Dreams and Reflections of Carol Armstrong, Firehouse Art Center, Norman, (405) 329-4523
- 30-Aug. 3 Impressions of Oklahoma's Prehistory, Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, (918) 596-2700

AUGUST

- 1-31 Rural Landmarks, Plains Indians and Pioneers Museum, Woodward, (405) 256-6136
- 1-31 Marie Kash Weltzheimer Art Exhibit, Goddard Center, Ardmore, (405) 226-0909
- 3-Sept. 1 The Great Land Lottery, Museum of the Great Plains,

Oklahoma Dining Guide

Key to Abbreviations

B=Breakfast L=Lunch D=Dinner
\$=Inexpensive (under \$6/person)
\$\$=Moderate (\$6-\$12/person)
\$\$\$=Expensive (over \$12/person)
AE=American Express CB=Carte Blanche
DC=Diners Club MC=MasterCard V=Visa
DS=Discover

This is a list of paid advertisements by the restaurants, not editorial reviews by *Oklahoma Today*. The directory lists some of the best restaurants across the state from barbeque joints to steak houses. For your convenience, restaurants have been divided into three regions, western, central and eastern Oklahoma, with cities and restaurants in alphabetical order.

Western

Boise City

La Mesa Restaurant—"Mexican Food at its best." American Food available. MasterCard/VISA/Discover, Rotary Wed. Noon. We Take Reservations. Hours: 11-9 Mon.-Sat. Hwy 287 South across from Love's Country Store. (405) 544-2997. L D \$ MC V DS.

Woodward

Buffy's Buffet Restaurant—Buffy's Buffet Restaurant is a family-style restaurant with delicious home-cooked meals and Buffy's famous fried chicken. We have specialty items such as crab legs, shrimp, frog legs, cod fish and bar-b-que. Also serving a large variety of salads and vegetables and our sweet-shop desert cart with hot peach or apple cobblers, chocolate cake, pie and ice cream. Open 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. and 5 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. weekdays, 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Sundays. So. Hwy 270, (405) 256-5873 L, D, \$-\$\$.

Central

El Reno

Cherokee Restaurant—A family-owned, 24-hour restaurant, known locally as "The Watering Hole" of western Oklahoma. We serve out-of-state tourists as well as home folk. Our famous Buffalo Burger, complete with hand-breaded onion rings, is a daily home-cooked luncheon special. In the evening we serve up our "Sirloin Stampede" dinner family style and suggest a piece of our delicious homemade pie to top it off! Open 24 hours. 15 mi. W of El Reno on I-40, exit 108. (405) 884-2508. BL D \$\$ MC V DS.

Guthrie

Stables Cafe—Enjoy the best in bar-b-q, steaks and burgers. Also serving homemade spaghetti and Tex-Mex-style dinners. All of our food is prepared to order. Housed in a century-old building. Expect casual dining in a nostalgic setting. Be sure to try the homemade onion rings. Hours: 11 a.m. - 9 p.m. Sun-Thurs., 11 a.m. - 10 p.m., Fri. and Sat. L D \$ \$\$ AE CB DC MC V.

Stillwater

Bobo's Mexican Restaurant Y Cantina—Bobo's Restaurant Y Cantina was into "Southwest" long before "Southwestern" was in. Elegant, impeccable service—the most delicious Santa Fe, Chihuahua, Sonora & Tex-Mex-style Mexican food & margaritas east of New Mexico. Three-foot-thick adobe walls with painted trees, intricate wrought-iron chandeliers, and hand-carved woodwork from Mexico tell why this granddaddy of Stillwater Mexican Restaurants has an international reputation. M-W 10:30 a.m. - 10 p.m., Thur. 10:30 a.m. - 11 p.m., F - Sat. 10:30 - Midnight. Sat - Sun brunch, 5020 W. 6th, Hwy 51 (405) 372-9353. L D \$\$ AE V MC DS.

Eastern

Tulsa

Jamil's—Thick hickory-grilled steaks, barbequed ribs, large lobster tails and seafood are accompanied by seven courses of Lebanese hors d'oeuvres. Dinner only. 2833 E. 51st St. (918) 742-9097. \$\$ AE CB DC MC V DS.



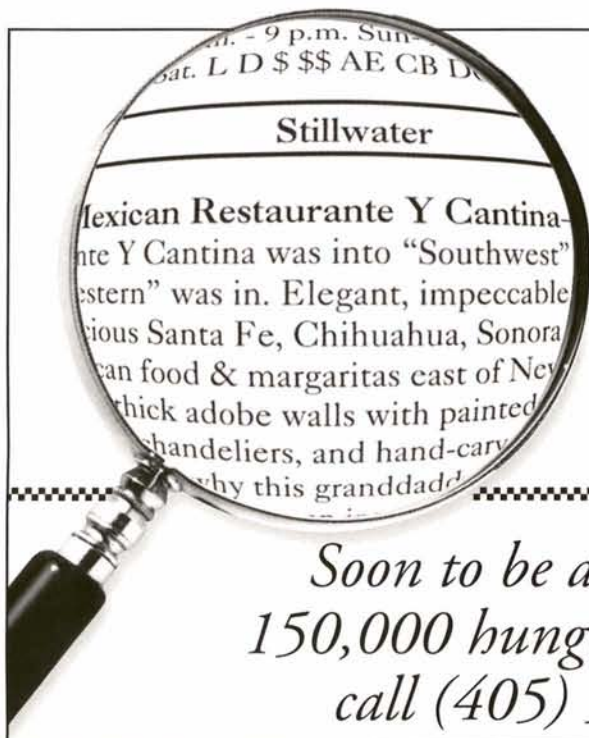
La Mesa Mexican Restaurant

American food available
Visa and MasterCard accepted

Across from Love's
Boise City, OK
405/544-2997

Ski Groups Welcome!

(Drivers eat free with groups of 6 or more. \$5 maximum.)
Rotary Club meets Wednesdays at noon
Member Oklahoma Restaurant Association



*Highlight your good tastes with a
listing in Oklahoma Today's*

Oklahoma Dining Guide

*Soon to be an invaluable resource for nearly
150,000 hungry readers! To list your restaurant,
call (405) 521-2496 or (800) 777-1793*

Made-in-America Music July 23-25

Duncan in Stephens County is the kind of town where everyone turns out for high school football games, it's hard to find a parking place on Main Street, and local newspaper headlines applaud folks' can-do spirit. "We're like apple pie," says twelve-year resident Vickie Milam. So when Duncan leaders were brainstorming about what kind of musical festival they might assemble to show off their state-of-the-art concert hall (paid for in cash, of course), it came down to one clear choice: it would be an American Music Festival.

Moreover, they wouldn't hire musicians exclusively from out of state or from Europe, they would go out of their way to make sure an abundance of Oklahoma musicians would appear at the festival.

To that end, artistic director Peter Simons has commissioned a new work by New York composer Edward Thomas and composer Jim Wintle from Durant. Oklahoma musicians will join members of the New York-based orchestra, the Vivaldi Traveling Circus, performing works by Aaron Copland, Scott Joplin, and John Philip Sousa. A Denver company will perform "Pure Gershwin"; actor William A. Sommerfield of Philadelphia will portray George Washington throughout the weekend, and an all-Oklahoma chorus will sing the finale.

"The program will be both broad and discriminating," promises Simons, a Tulsa concert pianist who has toured throughout the United States as well as in Europe, Scandinavia, and Mexico. "My vision is to showcase the best of Oklahoma and the best of America."

Most events will be held at Duncan's Simmons Center, 800 N. 29th. (800) 255-0909.

—BP

Lawton, (405) 581-3460

28-Sept. 19 Wood by Alan Lacer and Jewelry by Gael Sloop, Firehouse Art Center, Norman, (405) 324-4523

DRAMA

JULY

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1-25 | Oklahoma Shakespearean Festival, Durant, (405) 924-0121 |
| 2-31 | <i>Prelude to a Kiss</i> , Pollard Theatre, Guthrie, (405) 282-2800 |
| 4, 5, 11, 12 | <i>Oliver</i> , Jewel Box Theatre, OKC, (405) 521-1786 |
| 6-17 | <i>Show Boat</i> , Lyric Theatre, Kirkpatrick Fine Arts Auditorium, OKC, (405) 948-6800 |
| 13-25 | <i>The Owl and the Pussycat</i> , OK Children's Theatre, OKC, (405) 948-6408 |
| 16-24 | <i>Greater Tuna</i> , John Williams Theatre, Tulsa, (918) 747-9494 |
| 16-Aug. 1 | <i>Love Letters</i> , Carpenter Square Theatre, OKC, (405) 232-6500 |
| 20-31 | <i>Sugar</i> , Kirkpatrick Fine Arts Auditorium, OKC, (405) 948-6800 |
| 22-25 | <i>Oklahoma!</i> , Ada Community Theatre, Ada, (405) 436-2282 |

AUGUST

- | | |
|------|---|
| 3-14 | <i>A Chorus Line</i> , Lyric Theatre, OKC, (405) 948-6800 |
| 6-22 | <i>The Music Man</i> , Theatre Tulsa, Tulsa, (918) 596-7111 |

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 6-Sept. 11 | <i>Dracula</i> , Pollard Theatre, Guthrie, (405) 282-2800 |
| 12-Sept. 5 | <i>Julius Caesar</i> , Hafer Park, Edmond, (405) 340-1222 |
| 25-Sept. 19 | <i>A Few Good Men</i> , Jewel Box Theatre, OKC, (405) 521-1786 |

MUSIC/DANCE

JULY

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 3 | George Jones, Fair Building, Woodward, (405) 256-4101 |
| 3, 4, 9, 10 | <i>Sid the Serpent Who Wanted to Sing</i> , OU, Norman, (405) 364-8962 |
| 7-10 | Powderhorn Park Music Festival, Langley, (405) 732-3964 |
| 8, Aug. 12 | Summer Twilight Concert Series, Chandler Park, Tulsa, (918) 596-5990 |
| 9, 23, Aug. 6 | Courtyard Concert Series, Simmons Center, Duncan, (405) 252-2900 |
| 16 | <i>Sid the Serpent Who Wanted to Sing</i> , Children's Hospital, OKC, (405) 364-8962 |
| 18, Aug. 15 | Woods County Opry, Downtown, Alva, (405) 327-1647 |
| 23-25 | American Music Festival, Duncan, (800) 255-0909 |
| 24 | Bluegrass and Dulcimer Days, Prairie Song, Dewey, (918) 534-2662 |
| 24 | Okla-Hoe-Down, Midwest City, (405) 739-1293 |
| 30-Aug. 1 | Boiling Springs Bluegrass and Old Time Music Festival, Woodward, (405) 254-9169 |

AUGUST

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 4-8 | Grant's Bluegrass Festival and Old Time Music, Salt Creek Park, Hugo, (405) 326-5598 |
| 7 | OK All-Night Singing, Veterans Park, Konawa, (405) 925-3434 |
| 11-14 | Greenwood Jazz Celebration, Tulsa, (918) 586-700 |
| 12-14 | Green Country Bluegrass Festival, Langley, (918) 425-5887 |

INDIAN EVENTS

JULY

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 1-4 | Pawnee Indian Veterans Homecoming and Powwow, Pawnee, (918) 762-2108 |
| 1-11 | Trail of Tears Art Show, Cherokee Heritage Center, Tahlequah, (918) 456-6007 |
| 1-Aug. 15 | Comanche Kiowa Comanche, Jacobson Foundation, Norman, (405) 366-1667 |
| 1-Sept. 6 | Cherokee Art Show, Cherokee Heritage Center, Tahlequah, (918) 456-6007 |
| 2-4 | Tonkawa Powwow, Tonkawa, (405) 628-2561 |
| 2-4 | Quapaw Powwow, Beaver Park, Quapaw, (918) 542-1853 |
| 8-11 | Sac and Fox Nation Powwow and Rodeo, Stroud, (918) 968-3526 |
| 9, 10 | Southwest Native American Voices Writing Conference, OU, Norman, (405) 325-5101 |
| 9-11 | Native American Arts and Crafts Expo, State Fairgrounds, OKC, (405) 948-6700 |
| 16-18 | Otoe-Missouria Summer Encampment, Tribal Grounds, Ponca City, (405) 233-7509 |
| 23-25 | Cheyenne Homecoming Powwow, Clinton, (405) 323-1315 |
| 23-25 | Indian Hills Powwow, Sooner Road, OKC, (405) 528-5026 |
| 24-25 | Native Sun Water Park Powwow, Lawton, (405) 492-5075 |

30-Aug. 1 Cheyenne-Arapaho Summerfest Powwow, Concho Hill, El Reno, (405) 262-0345

AUGUST

6, 7 American Indian Expo Rodeo, Fairgrounds, Anadarko, (405) 247-6651
 6-8 Indian Nation Powwow, Concho Grounds, Concho, (405) 884-2764
 13-15 Intertribal Indian Club of Tulsa Powwow, Expo Square, Tulsa, (918) 836-1523
 16-21 American Indian Expo, Fairgrounds, Anadarko, (405) 247-6651
 26-29 Ponca Powwow, White Eagle, (405) 762-8104
 28 Honor Dance, Roman Nose State Park, Watonga, (405) 691-4330



RODEO AND HORSE EVENTS

JULY

1-3 LibertyFest Rodeo, Edmond, (405) 341-2121
 1-10 National Appaloosa Horse Show, State Fairgrounds, OKC, (405) 948-6700
 2, 3 Ranch Rodeo, Sayre, (405) 928-3386
 3 Soper Homecoming and Rodeo, Soper, (405) 345-2238
 4 Cutting Horse Contest, Boise City, (405) 544-3344
 8-10 Heritage Days Rodeo, El Reno, (405) 262-1188
 9-11 Chickasha Rodeo, Chickasha, (405) 224-3410
 12-19 International Youth Finals Rodeo, Shawnee, (405) 275-7020
 14-17 Elks Rodeo, Woodward, (405) 256-3549
 15-18 Cavalcade, Pawhuska, (918) 287-1553
 19-23 Ponies of the Americas, State Fairgrounds, OKC, (405) 278-8900
 21-24 Elks Rodeo, Woodward, (405) 256-7411
 28-31 National Arabian Horse Show, State Fairgrounds, OKC, (405) 278-8900
 29-31 Wrangler Rodeo Days, Fairview, (405) 227-2832
 30, 31 IPRA Rodeo, Clinton, (405) 323-7939
 30-Aug. 1 A.H.S.A. Miller's Pony Finals, Lazy E Arena, Guthrie, (405) 282-3004

AUGUST

1-7 Western Heritage Week and Rodeo, Ken Lance Sports Arena, Ada, (405) 332-4744
 5-7 Lawton Rangers Rodeo, Lawton, (405) 536-7860
 12-14 IPRA Rodeo, Heavener, (918) 653-4303
 14, 15 Paint Horse Show, State Fairgrounds, OKC, (405) 478-1599
 19-21 Pawnee Bill Memorial Rodeo, Fairgrounds, Pawnee, (918) 762-2108
 19-21 101 Ranch PRCA Rodeo, Ponca City, (405) 765-2340
 19-21 Freedom Rodeo, Freedom, (405) 621-3276
 20, 21 IPRA Open Rodeo, Rodeo Arena, Weatherford, (800) 725-7744
 21, 28 Wild West Show, Allen Ranch, Bixby, (918) 366-3010
 25-28 Will Rogers Memorial Rodeo, Vinita, (918) 256-7811



FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

JULY

2, 3 Huckleberry Festival, Jay, (918) 253-8698

2-11 SummerWind Festival, OU, Norman, (405) 325-0711
 3 Firecracker Festival, Eufaula, (918) 689-2703
 3, 4 LibertyFest Fourth of July Festival, Edmond, (405) 340-2121
 9,10 Midsummer Nights' Fair, Lions Park, Norman, (405) 329-4523
 9, 10 W.O.O.D.Y. Folk Art Festival, Okemah, (918) 623-912
 10, 11 Cowboy Rendezvous, Prairie Song, Dewey, (918) 530-2662
 14-17 Striper Festival, Kingston, (405) 795-2537
 15-17 Santa Fe Arts Festival, Shawnee, (405) 275-8412
 16,17 Peach Festival, Porter, (918) 483-3082
 16-18 Striped Bass Festival, Keystone Lake, Mannford, (918) 865-2000
 17 Peach Festival, Stratford, (405) 759-2351
 17 International Brick and Rolling Pin Festival, Foster Park Stroud, (918) 968-3321
 31 Whole Hawg Day, Downtown, Eufaula, (918) 689-3227

AUGUST

4-8 Lawton's Birthday Celebration, Lawton, (405) 355-354
 14 Black-eyed Pea Festival, Hollis, (405) 688-9545
 14 Watermelon Festival, Jeff Davis Park, Rush Springs (405) 476-3103

SPECIAL EVENTS

JULY

1-31 Ardmore's 106th Birthday Celebration, Ardmore (405) 223-7765
 3 Cherokee Strip Centennial Celebration, Tonkawa (405) 628-5101
 4 50th Bombing Anniversary, Boise City, (405) 544-3344
 16-18 Battle of Honey Springs Reenactment, Rentiesville (405) 521-2491
 17 Quartz Mountain Breakaway, Altus, (405) 477-4797
 17 Amish Barn Raising, Will Rogers Birthplace, Oologah (918) 341-0719
 17,24 Historical Walking Tours, Downtown, Ardmore (405) 226-6246
 20-24 Eskimo Joe's Anniversary Week, Stillwater, (405) 377-0799
 24-25 Cherokee Strip Centennial Excursion Train, Tulsa, (405) 521-2406
 29-31 Western Wheatland Green and Yellow Expo, Fairgrounds, Fairview, (405) 227-2265
 30-31 Sand Castle Contest, Tulsa, (918) 596-2001

AUGUST

6 Anadarko Birthday, Anadarko, (405) 247-6651
 7 Lindsay Air Show and Fly-In, Lindsay, (405) 756-4312
 7,8 Arcadia Lake Regatta, Edmond, (405) 341-2808
 13-15 Great Southwest Street Rod Nationals, State Fairgrounds, OKC, (405) 948-6700
 15 Will Rogers Memorial Service, Oologah, (918) 443-2790
 20-22 Hot Air Balloon Festival, UCO, Edmond, (405) 341-2808
 25 Old Settlers' Days, Vinita, (918) 256-7133
 26-28 Old Timers' Days, Choctaw, (405) 390-3303
 28, 29 Ben Clark Muzzle Loading Rifle Shoot, El Reno, (405) 262-3223
 29-Sept. 5 Pat Hennessey Celebration, Hennessey, (405) 853-7838

The information in the calendar is current, but dates and times can change without notice. Please check in advance before attending any event.

COME TO THE MOUNTAIN



STUDY AT THE 1993
OKLAHOMA FALL ARTS INSTITUTES

Located at Quartz Mountain
near Lone Wolf in southwest
Oklahoma, the Oklahoma Fall

Arts Institutes offer adult
education in the fine arts with
noted professional artists.

Join us at the Mountain in
October in Oklahoma's Great
Plains Country.

CHORAL MUSIC

FOLK ARTS

PHOTOGRAPHY

THEATRE

VISUAL ARTS

WRITING

The Oklahoma Fall Arts
Institutes are open to serious
amateur or professional artists
21 years or older. For more
information contact



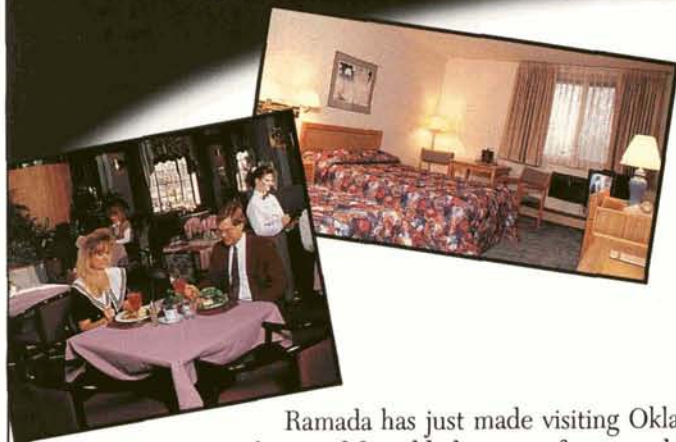
OKLAHOMA ARTS INSTITUTE
P.O. Box 18154, Oklahoma City, OK 73154
405-842-0890 FAX: 405-848-4538

This advertisement was underwritten by



HOBBY LOBBY
Super Selection, super savings everyday!

Save With Ramada In Oklahoma



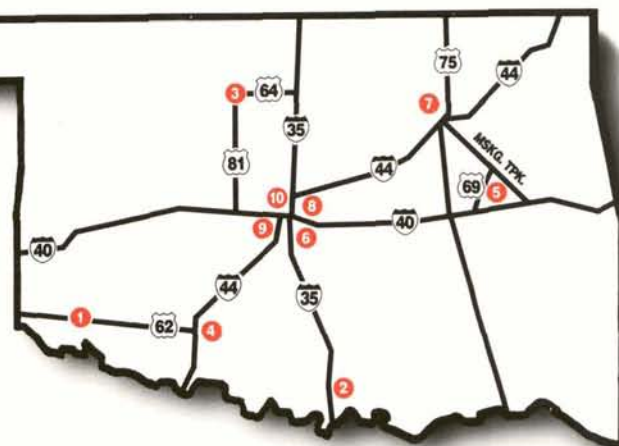
\$39-\$50*

For Up To Four People

Ramada has just made visiting Oklahoma more affordable than ever. Our low rates start at just \$39 per night...And for added savings, four people can stay for the price of one.

Plus, in addition to great savings, you can also take advantage of all the amenities you've come to expect from Ramada... Stretch out in one of our big, comfortable rooms. Or enjoy dinner in one of our fine restaurants. And for relaxing, take a dip in a sparkling pool or visit a cozy lounge.

And finding a Ramada is just a phone call away. Call 1-800-2-RAMADA. And ask about our Special Oklahoma Package.



PARTICIPATING PROPERTIES

1. Altus (Hwy. 62 & Kellwood) \$39
2. Ardmore (I-35 & Broadway) \$49
3. Enid (Hwy. 60 & Cleveland) \$40
4. Lawton (I-44, 2nd & Ferris) \$46
5. Muskogee (Hwy. 69) \$45-\$48
6. Norman (I-35 & Lindsey) \$48
7. Tulsa (I-44 & Yale) \$49.95

Oklahoma City Area:

8. Airport South (I-35 & S.E. 66th) \$42
9. Airport West (I-44 & Meridian) \$44
10. Ramada Limited (I-44, 39th & Portland) \$45

RAMADA®

INNS, HOTELS, SUITES, RESORTS AND RAMADA LIMITEDS

FOR RESERVATIONS CALL

1-800-2-RAMADA

OR YOUR LOCAL TRAVEL PROFESSIONAL

AND ASK FOR THE SPECIAL OKLAHOMA PACKAGE.

*Rates and rooms are based on availability at participating locations. Amenities vary at properties. Offer good through December 30, 1993. Not valid with any other special rates, discounts or promotions, or in connection with meetings, conventions or during special events. Not valid for suites or efficiencies or in connection with groups. ©1993 Ramada Franchise Systems, Inc.